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Columbia University Germanic Studies

STRINDBERG'S  
CONCEPTION OF HISTORY



# STRINDBERG'S CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

*Victor*  
BY *Manual*  
HARRY V. E. PALMBLAD, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF GERMAN AND FRENCH IN PHILLIPS UNIVERSITY  
SOMETIME INSTRUCTOR IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



New York  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS  
1927

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Printed from type. Published February, 1927

Printed in the United States of America

16.9.59  
P171

To my Wife and to my Son Frederic

97836





## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to examine Strindberg's conception of history and the development of his historical thinking from about 1870 to the end of his life. The two lines of investigation pursued are represented by Parts I and II; a general summary of results is given in the Conclusion.

Part I traces the development of Strindberg's historical theories and includes a discussion of related scientific, philosophic, and religious ideas. For this part of the study, those works of the Swedish writer have been used that deal mainly or incidentally with theory, or which give expression, even indirectly, to such scientific, philosophic, or religious ideas as influenced Strindberg's conception of history. The autobiographical sketches and "Världshistoriens mystik" have furnished most of the material for this part. References have been made also to other essays and occasionally to works of fiction. The historical or semi-historical works have not been used, with the exception of *Svenska folket*. This work has been drawn upon, but only where it concerns itself with theory.

Part II deals with the interpretation of history as shown in the historical or semi-historical works. Here an attempt has been made to determine what historical conceptions Strindberg wished to convey rather than to examine critically how far he was successful in conveying these conceptions. This part of the study has been based on the historical plays, beginning with *Mäster Olof*, and on *Gamla Stockholm*, *Svenska folket*, *Nya svenska öden* (*Hövdingaminnen*), and *Historiska miniatyrer*. Altho the author's technic has not been studied in detail, incidental reference to it has seemed advisable at times.

It will readily be seen that a work covering as much ground as this can make no pretense either to finality or to exhaustive-

## PREFACE

ness. Its purpose is rather to form a basis for further and more detailed study of a phase of Strindberg's activity which has hitherto received comparatively little attention.

Nor does the study make any pretense to absolute objectivity. When an attempt is made to reduce an author's views to a definite system of philosophy, there is always a danger of doing violence to his ideas. A certain selection must be made. Small and comparatively insignificant elements must be eliminated in order to allow the general outline to stand out more clearly. What results must be a presentation more or less arbitrary, and to a certain extent misleading in that it gives an impression of regularity which does not accord with fact. On the other hand, the outline will give a clearer conception of the man studied, and will therefore furnish a better basis for a close investigation of more detailed phases of his activity. This general statement is particularly applicable to Strindberg, whose ideas were often contradictory and whose thinking was frequently non-sequential.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all who have in any way been of service to me in the preparation of this study. This work has been done under the direction of Professor Robert Herndon Fife of Columbia University. What little merit it may have is due in a large measure to his untiring aid and inspiration. For valuable suggestions I am indebted to Professor Anathon Aal of the University of Christiania; Professor Henrik Schück of the University of Stockholm; Professors A. J. Barnouw, F. W. J. Heuser and Henry H. L. Schulze, and Mr. Houston Peterson, all of Columbia University; Professor H. H. Lane of the University of Kansas; and Professor J. T. Ganoë of Phillips University. The Columbia University Library has been freely drawn upon and its officers have afforded much help in the matter of bibliography.

## PREFACE

To my wife I am indebted for several suggestions as to style and for typing the manuscript. Lastly, my thanks are due to Professors Fife and Schulze for their painstaking labors in connection with the final proof-reading.

H. V. E. P.

March, 1926





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PART I

The Development of Strindberg's Historical  
Theories



## CHAPTER I

### STRINDBERG'S EARLIER CONCEPTION OF HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Strindberg's earlier historical ideas, covering approximately the period 1870-1890, and to investigate what men and movements influenced him in forming these conceptions. The arrangement has been first, topical; each topic being then treated, so far as possible, chronologically within itself. For the sake of convenience, each idea has been treated under the particular man who seems to have been its exponent or from whom Strindberg seems to have derived it. It must be borne in mind, however, that some of these ideas came to be almost common property during the period indicated, that some of them were common to several men, and finally, that the question of influence is a particularly difficult one with Strindberg. In many cases he probably arrived empirically at some of the conclusions which he later found in other authors and in favor of which a predisposition had been thus created. In other cases, it is likely that the authors prepared him for opinions which he later confirmed experimentally.

One of the men that greatly influenced the thinking of the Swedish writer, especially with reference to his interpretation

<sup>1</sup> The following works have been used for this chapter: *Mäster Olof*, *Svenska folket*, II, *Gillet's hemlighet*, *Giftas*, *Likt och olikt*, I, II, *Tjänstekvinnans son*, *Jäsningstiden*, *I röda rummet*, *Författaren*, *Prosabitar från 1880-talet*, *Legender*, *Efterslätter*. In this, as in the later chapters, the reference is partly to volumes of Strindberg's *Samlade skrifter*, partly to individual editions. See Bibliography, pp. 194 ff. S.S.= *Samlade skrifter*; H.D.= *Historika dramer*.



of history, was Henry Thomas Buckle. According to Strindberg's own account in his third autobiographical volume, *I röda rummet* (1886), his acquaintance with the ideas of the English historian goes back to 1872. He had gone to Stockholm with a view to developing his literary talents. Here he associated with a group of artists, two of whom continually referred him to the English historical philosopher. He at first refused to accept an authority unknown to Uppsala, but finally borrowed the *History of Civilization in England*. The book made a profound impression on him.

From the account referred to above, and later passages in the same work, we obtain the following summary of what our author considered the chief points in Buckle's philosophy. Man is subject to the laws of nature like all other organic beings. The old distinction between the spiritual and the material is without foundation. The laws of chemical affinity are just as spiritual as the sympathy of souls. Thus love, generally referred to as divine, and leading ultimately to marriage, depends upon such external conditions as the price of grain;<sup>2</sup> suicide, upon wages;<sup>3</sup> religion, upon natural scenery, climate, soil.<sup>4</sup> All speculative philosophy, which seeks to make laws from within, is only a better kind of theology.<sup>5</sup> Only knowledge (i.e. exact knowledge) can make man happy, hence knowledge should be our chief aim.<sup>6</sup> The object of our knowledge should be the laws inherent in nature.<sup>7</sup> Without this knowledge, no progress is possible. The ignorant masses, Buckle maintains, can never be of any help in a forward movement.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Buckle, *History of Civilization*, I, 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 121-148.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-167.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-183.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>8</sup> As an example of this, he cites the history of Charles III of Spain. *Hist. of Civil.*, II, 578-583. Cf. *I röda rummet*, S.S., XIX, 29.

With this exaltation of knowledge, there was associated in the philosophy of the English writer a depreciation of moral systems. Moral standards he considered as mere matters of convention, hence subject to change and of little importance.<sup>9</sup> In fact, he went further than this. He saw in moral zeal without knowledge a distinct menace. The greatest harm is wrought, he insisted, not by men that are evil, but by men that are ignorant, and at the same time possessed of strong moral convictions, as is shown by the history of the religious persecutions.<sup>10</sup>

Buckle also denied any good influence to rulers and governments.<sup>11</sup> In general, he considered everything in the world wrong, but wrong from a necessity imposed by laws. He denied the freedom of the human will.<sup>12</sup>

In discussing the ideas of Buckle, Strindberg stresses the fact that the English author, far from posing as having found truth—"which, indeed, is relative"<sup>13</sup>—pointed to doubt as the greatest factor in human progress, "doubt is the beginning of wisdom."<sup>14</sup>

Strindberg's interest in the English historian continued. In 1872, while he was writing *En avfälling* (later *Mäster Olof*), he and his friends engaged in endless discussions about Buckle. This, he says, afforded him mental gymnastics and kept his thinking clear.<sup>15</sup> He frequently applies Buckle's doctrine to the treatment of different questions. The failure of Sweden to

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. of Civil.* I, 179.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-184.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. for discussion of the freedom of the will, *ibid.*, 18-20.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. p. 13, footnote 37, below.

<sup>14</sup> *I röda rummet*, S.S., XIX, 19-22. Cf. *Hist. of Civil.*, I, 334-335. The sense of the importance of doubt and negation always occupied a prominent place in Strindberg's thinking. Cf. pp. 16, 60-62, below.

<sup>15</sup> *I röda rummet*, S.S., XIX, 34.

receive and accept the ideas of the English historian he explains by Buckle's own statement that no literature can benefit a people that is not prepared to receive it.<sup>16</sup> The one doctrine, however, that Strindberg particularly appropriated from Buckle was the one concerning the material basis of things. In the preface to *Giftas* (1884)—a number of stories dealing with the marriage problem from different angles—Strindberg calls attention to the fact that among the lower animals sex relationships are regulated by economic factors. The wild duck, he notes, is a monogamist, but the tame duck becomes a polygamist. The same he finds to be true of the dog, which in the domestic state does not have to worry about his food. The periodic mating time, he also points out, is dependent on the relative plenty or scarcity of food supplies, and hence disappears in the domestic state, where the food supply is the same at all times.<sup>17</sup>

Another application of the theory of the material basis of things is found in *Likt och olikt*, I, in the article "Nationalitet och svenskhet" (1884), where the question of national characteristics is discussed. In speaking of frivolity ("lättsinnighet"), Strindberg says that the Chinese are supposed to be the most frivolous of all nations. What is the reason? he asks. The physiologist, he says, attributes it to an excessive amount of tea drinking—hence, he says, it has an absolutely physical basis.<sup>18</sup>

In a series of letters written in 1884 called "Kvarstadsresan," and a part of *Likt och olikt*, II, we find a recurrence of the same theme. In discussing the relations of man and woman in marriage, Strindberg characterizes the woman question as a specifically Northern one, perhaps Norwegian. Nor-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. Cf. *Hist. of Civil.*, I, 272, also 257.

<sup>17</sup> *Giftas*, S.S., XIV, 21-22. In general the trials of married life, as portrayed in these stories, have largely an economic basis. Cf. Helmecke, *Buckle's Influence on Strindberg*, 40-41.

<sup>18</sup> S.S., XVI, 151.

way, he says, is a country with hard soil. The people have spread themselves over large areas. The winter has driven them into close rooms; and there they sit, two and two, and brood over their black thoughts in darkness and lonesomeness. The people, he continues, become less sociable in the north. The ego develops to an unnatural size, and when two such egos are brought together, two of them alone without any outlet for their energies, then the home becomes a lion's den.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of the physical basis is stressed in the same letters a few pages later. Strindberg in discussing the question of marriage and the emancipation of woman insists that the entire social question is a question of food—without food, he says, man cannot become a child of God, an army chaplain, or an idealist.<sup>20</sup>

Buckle's theory of the influence of climate on character is touched on in the volume *I röda rummet* (1886), where Strindberg discusses the financial conditions of Scandinavia during the year 1873. Here he calls attention to Buckle's theory that the Swedes and the Northerners in general are unsteady because the extreme variations of the climate lead to enforced idleness in winter and feverish haste in summer.<sup>21</sup>

Of great importance for our present investigation is the evolutionary doctrine which commonly bears the name of Darwin. The chief idea that the evolutionists have contributed to modern thought is that of gradual and continued development. It is true, this doctrine as applied to history was found already in Herder and Hegel, but the evolutionary school gave an added impulse to its scientific application to historical study.<sup>22</sup> There

<sup>19</sup> *Likt och olik*, II, S.S., XVII, 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>21</sup> S.S., XIX, 68. Cf. Buckle's *Hist. of Civ.* I, 43-44.

<sup>22</sup> As an illustration of the influence the Darwinian theory had on historical study, we may note that Taine developed his historical "milieu" theory under the influence of Darwin (Kummer, *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, II, 110.)

is no doubt that Strindberg's conception of history was largely influenced by the evolutionists;<sup>23</sup> this influence made him favorably disposed to the idea of organic development as presented by some of the modern historians, like Hildebrand, who had proceeded along the lines of Herder and Hegel.<sup>24</sup>

Strindberg's first acquaintance with the Darwinian theory dates back to 1870. In *Jäsningstiden* (1885), the second of his autobiographical volumes, he tells of his life at Uppsala, whither he had returned to write a play, while ostensibly studying for a degree. His dinner company, he says, consisted of "medical students, atheists, and scientists." Among these he heard for the first time the mention of Darwin and his doctrines, but these made no strong impression on him at this time.<sup>25</sup>

He had actually accepted Darwin's theory of the origin of species a few years later, as we learn from *Författaren* (1886), the fourth autobiographical volume. In 1877 he wrote an epilog to *Mäster Olof*, in which he formulated a pessimistic view of life.<sup>26</sup> In this epilog, he shows the strife between good and evil, utilizing the old Persian legend of Ormuz and Ahriman, with the "Eternal One" standing above the contestants. God,

<sup>23</sup> I cannot agree with Helmecke, who considers Strindberg's evolutionary conception of history, at least in the case of *Gamla Stockholm*, as due specifically to Buckle's influence (*Buckle's Influence on Strindberg*, 36).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. also p. 25, footnote 73, below. For Strindberg's reference to Hegel, cf. p. 11, footnote 30, below. In this connection mention should also be made of Voltaire, whom Strindberg in 1890 credits with instituting "the beginning of a new kind of history writing" (*Likt och olik*, II, S.S., XVII, 274).

<sup>25</sup> S.S., XVIII, 359.

<sup>26</sup> From the passage here referred to we gather that the epilog existed in 1877. That it was written in this same year is indicated by the author's own statement on the first sheet of the Ms. (Lindberg, *Tillkomsten av Strindbergs "Mäster Olof,"* 18).



he says, he must retain, altho he seemed now an unfathomable power whose being it was not worth while to try to understand; and, altho he had accepted Darwin's doctrines of a development from inorganic to organic life ever progressing toward man, he could not see in these any support for atheism; on the contrary, it was just in this development within natural laws that he found a strong proof for the existence of a wise law giver.<sup>27</sup>

Later in the same work, Strindberg speaks of utilizing a principle of Darwin's in *Gillets hemlighet* (1879)—the individual's transient and independent life within the race ("individens övergående och självständiga liv i släktet"), with a few suggestions of degeneration, where the son inherits the place of the father without inheriting his stolen advantages ("meriter").<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> S.S., XIX, 158-159. Cf. for this same idea, S.S., XXII, 183.

<sup>28</sup> S.S., XIX, 172-173. Lamm, commenting on this, says, "This can properly refer only to Jacques's inherited disposition for crime. The Nemesis theme which lies back of it as a moral idea must have entirely different roots; one cannot help noticing how near Strindberg's conception here comes to that of the Inferno dramas" (*Strindbergs dramer*, I, 192-193). The idea that Strindberg here particularly attributes to Darwin, or considers of Darwinian origin, is that of the individual's transient and independent life within the race. The emphasis is not, however, on the biological, but on the sociological or historical phase of existence. Strindberg has taken a biological idea and transferred it to the field of human history. The Canon ("Domherren") tries to impress on Hans's mind first of all that he, as everyone else, has been given his task, but that each individual should perform this task, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the task—in other words, man labors for the race. Secondly, he calls Hans's attention to the fact that three generations have worked on the church before him; their names have been forgotten, and now his son is to continue the work (*Romantiska dramer*, I, 456-457). It should be noted that there is nothing to indicate that these workers were of the same family as Hans. It is true, Hans's son Jacques is elected; but the dissatisfaction expressed at his election shows that the transmission of the task from father to son is not considered as a matter of course (*ibid.*, 449). The idea, then, of "the individual's transient and independent life within

No less important than Darwin as an exponent of evolutionary philosophy was Herbert Spencer. His ideas, like those of Buckle and Darwin, greatly influenced Strindberg. Spencer, in his synthetic philosophy, applied the principles of evolution to different phases of existence. Strindberg speaks of him in "Den litterära reaktionen i Sverige" (1886), as the one who had brought Darwin's evolutionary theory to its logical conclusion in his sociology.<sup>29</sup> In the original manuscript of this article, there is a passage, omitted in the printed article, in which Strindberg characterizes as Spencer's greatest contribution his denial of the unlimited influence of the individual upon his times. In opposition to the Romantic School with its stark individualism, Spencer had shown, Strindberg goes on to say in

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the race" does not have a biological application here; the individual is considered a link, not as the receiver and transmitter of life, but as the receiver and transmitter of civilization, as one of a great number of relay workers on a task—an idea frequently found in Strindberg's historical works.

The same is true of the secondary idea—that of "degeneration, where the son inherits the father's place without inheriting his stolen advantages." This probably has reference to the position of guild master ("*ällderman*"), which Jacques inherits, while he may be said in a sense to fail to inherit the stolen glory and influence of his father: he is immediately looked upon with distrust and has numerous enemies. It is possible, also, that Strindberg thinks of "place" in the sense in which the son may be said to take his father's place in society when the latter grows old. "Degeneration," no doubt, is used by Strindberg here with a transferred meaning. In biology it means getting away from the norm of the species thru failing to inherit some of the characteristics of the parent. Here it refers to Jacques's failure to inherit the stolen glory and influence possessed by his father.

To any one who has noticed the great freedom with which Strindberg modifies the ideas which he borrows to suit his own purposes and the frequency with which he applies the laws found in one realm to another, this interpretation will hardly seem forced.

<sup>29</sup> *Likt och olik*, II, S.S., XVII, 213. Cf. for the same idea Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 721.

the manuscript passage, that the "great man" is the product of the cooperation of an entire generation.<sup>30</sup>

The first work containing expressions of this theory is *Svenska folket*, written in 1881. Strindberg's enunciation of the doctrine in this work, especially his attack on Geijer as the representative of the old school and his commendation of Hildebrand as an exponent of the Spencerian theory, will be discussed in Part II.<sup>31</sup>

The idea of the dependent relation of the individual to his times was more than an academic theory with Strindberg. It pervaded his entire thinking. In the interpretation of his own life, he is highly conscious of the influence his surroundings and associates had on him. An example of this is found in *Tjänstekvinnans son*, his first autobiographical volume, written in 1885. Looking back to the time when he left his home in 1867 to go to Uppsala, he reflects that "if he could have seen himself now, he would have found that most of the words that he spoke were taken out of books or copied from his comrades; that his gestures were derived from teachers or friends; his facial expressions, from his mother or nurse; his inclinations, from his father, his grandfather perhaps."<sup>32</sup> Another instance of this consciousness appears in the second autobiographical volume, *Jämsningstiden* (1886). Here Strindberg tells of the farewell feast which preceded his departure from Uppsala for Stockholm in 1872. On this occasion, he says, he thanked his friends, "recognizing the obligations under which everyone is

<sup>30</sup> S.S., XVII, "Anmärkningar," 322. In "Hjärnonas kamp" (1888), Strindberg refers to Hegel as the one who discovered "the development of the word and the thought in history, in which man is only a passing moment" ("ordets och tankens utveckling i historien, i vilken individen blott är ett övergående moment") (*Prosabitar från 1880-talet*, S.S., XXII, 148).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. p. 114, below.

<sup>32</sup> S.S., XVIII, 219.

to his associates, since a personality does not develop independently and of itself, but rather sucks a drop out of every other soul with whom it comes in contact, just as the bee from a million buttercups collects its honey, which it nevertheless melts over and gives out for its own."<sup>33</sup>

Strindberg assumes a similar attitude in viewing his own authorship. Mortensen points out that the Swedish writer in discussing the genesis of his writings differs from many great men, who believe that they have created their works independently of all traditions and predecessors. Strindberg, Mortensen says, shows a keen ability in analyzing the influences which have helped to make some of his works what they are.<sup>34</sup>

In another passage in *Jäsningstiden*, our author applies the principle to the field of speculative thought. In a discussion of the Boström philosophy, he asks the question, What is the relation between the philosophic system prevalent at a certain period and the period itself? The philosophic system, he answers, is the synthesis of the thoughts of the given period. The philosopher does not make the times; the times make him. He merely lists and collects contemporary thought; by so doing he can react on his surroundings. His influence, therefore, ceases and must cease with the end of the period.<sup>35</sup>

In this discussion, we find not only the insistence on the influence of the times on the individual, but also the admission that the individual in turn reacts on society, altho this reaction is limited in its influence and importance.

When writing *Svenska folket* in 1881, Strindberg was strongly impressed by the first of these propositions, but he more or less ignored the second, as he himself acknowledges in his account of the genesis of that work in 1886.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>34</sup> *Från Röda rummet till sekelskiftet*, I, 52-53.

<sup>35</sup> *S.S.*, XVIII, 347.

"Until that time," he says, "history had been looked upon as produced by more or less powerful personal wills put up and supported by interests; Providence had been seen ruling the fates thru God-chosen men, and history had been written by God-chosen privileged individuals. Now a man from the lower classes was to conduct the inquiry; now a non-privileged individual wanted to write history as it appeared from the lower strata of society, and it was to be seen how lights from below would affect the historical personalities that had been raised to the dignity of national monuments. That this happened for once was in no way bad; exaggerations must be corrected by exaggerations. However, he hardly arrived any nearer the truth than the others. The main defect in his method was necessarily this, that he overestimated the ruling laws and underestimated personality."<sup>36</sup>

Another idea which Strindberg found in Spencer is that of the relativity of truth.<sup>37</sup> This is of interest, not as an historical

<sup>36</sup> S.S., XIX, 180. We find expressions of the theory as applied directly to history in *Svenska folket*. These are discussed in Part II, pp. 113-115.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Likt och olikt* II, S.S., XVII, 265. See also p. 16, below. Mortensen refers Strindberg's conception of the relativity of truth—particularly, however, with reference to *Mäster Olof*—to Buckle (*Från Röda rummet till sekelskiftet*, I, 77). Cf. also p. 5, above, and Henderson's *European Dramatists*, 52. Lamm points out that Buckle emphasizes the relative and temporary character of all human opinions, particularly in the field of religion (*Strindbergs dramer*, I, 102-104). Strindberg, of course, found the idea both in Buckle and in Spencer, but no doubt would have arrived at it himself. In his application of the theory he differed from both.

It should be noted that to Buckle the theory of the relativity of truth is an attitude assumed for practical reasons rather than a philosophical idea—it is a kind of "Philosophie des Als-Ob." He recognizes the fact that at different stages people differ in their capacity for receiving truths; but the truths themselves, he insists, remain the same (*Hist. of Civ.* I, 257). Again, in discussing the work of Chilling-



theory or method, but as a new attitude on the part of the historian relative to the scenes and actions he has under observation. It is a step away from the "judicial" attitude assumed by the older historians, the extreme opposite of which is found in historians like Taine, who consider things neither good nor

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worth and his followers, he recognizes the theory of the relativity of truth as a fallacy, tho a necessary one. He finds that all of these men insisted upon the authority of private judgment as forming a tribunal from which no one had the power of appeal. The inference to be drawn from this, he says, seems to be obvious. "If the ultimate test of truth is individual judgment, and if no one can affirm that the judgments of men, which are often contradictory, can ever be infallible, it follows of necessity, that there is no decisive criterion of religious truth. This is a melancholy, and, as I firmly believe, a most inaccurate conclusion; but it is one which every nation must entertain before it can achieve that great work of toleration which, even in our country and in our time, is not yet consummated" (*ibid.*, 352).

Spencer, on the other hand, insists that man is incapable of grasping absolute truths. Ultimate religious ideas, he says, and ultimate scientific ideas, alike turn out to be merely symbols of the actual, not cognitions of it. The conviction that human intelligence is incapable of absolute knowledge, he says, is one that has slowly been gaining ground as civilization has advanced. Each new ontological theory from time to time propounded in lieu of previous ones shown to be untenable has been followed by a criticism leading to a new scepticism (*First Principles*, 68). Our knowledge, according to Spencer, can only extend to the relations of things around us, never to the things themselves (*ibid.*, 85). In religion, he says, we are "making persistent attempts to frame conceptions of that which cannot be conceived. From the beginning, it has been only thru the successive failures of such conceptions to satisfy the mind that higher ones have been gradually reached; doubtless the conceptions now current are indispensable as transitional modes of thought . . . . By continually seeking to know and by being continually thrown back with a deepened conviction of the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness that it is alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that thru which all things exist as the Unknowable" (*ibid.*, 112-113).

bad, but indifferent.<sup>38</sup> The idea of the relativity of truth does not do away with moral judgment, but merely assumes that a thing may be good or bad according as it is viewed from different standpoints, that nothing is in itself absolutely right or wrong, that where there are two contending sides each one may be right from a certain point of view, and that there may be truth on both sides of a question.

In *Författaren* (1886), Strindberg in telling of his relations with his friends during the year 1881, says that they had agreed on one point: the old state of society must be attacked, but what was to take its place was unknown. The fact was also insisted on that no program was to be adopted, since it was recognized that the truth of to-day is the lie of to-morrow.<sup>39</sup>

Later in the same work, he discusses the genesis of the series *Tjänstekvinnans son* (the four autobiographical volumes written in 1885-1886, the first one of which bears the name of the series). He desired to review his life, he says, in order to evaluate past experience, clarify his ideas, perhaps in a manner to find himself. Someone, he says, will naturally ask, Where is the truth he sought in this inquiry? To this he answers that it is everywhere, here and there in the multitude of pages he has written. Look and see, he says, whether the truths found there can be synthesized; see whether they will be valid for more than a year, for five years; or, in fact, see whether they will be valid for a single moment, since this would

<sup>38</sup> The non-judicial attitude or the entire setting aside of the moral aspect of human action in history is the logical result of the application to history of the methods of the natural sciences which everywhere look for the underlying laws without "condemning" or "approving" any of the processes they observe. This principle was carried into literature by Georg Brandes, whose *Kritiker og portrætter* Strindberg read with great interest in 1870 (*Jämsningstiden*, S.S., XVIII, 376-377, also *Likt och olikt*, II, S.S., XVII, 212). For Strindberg's later condemnation of this ignoring of the moral element, see *Legender*, S.S., XXVIII, 360.

<sup>39</sup> S.S., XIX, 187.

require the approval of the majority. And do not forget, he adds, that truth cannot be found, since truth, like everything else, is in a process of constant development. People want a faith, an opinion, because that is convenient. But faith means stagnation; an opinion must be changed in a few years, when new discoveries shall have disproved it.<sup>40</sup>

In the article "Voltaire," written in 1890 and included in *Likt och olik*, II, Strindberg definitely ascribes the theory of the relativity of truth to Spencer. In a discussion of Descartes, he says that the French philosopher in his purely negative procedure<sup>41</sup> partly anticipated the discovery later made by Herbert Spencer, "the philosopher of our times," concerning the nature of truth, that it is in eternal movement and therefore cannot be definitely fitted into any static system. The logical conclusion of Spencer's theory, he says, is that all activity aiming at reform should observe a negative attitude, doubting, or popularly speaking, tearing down, dissolving,—a process much opposed by the champions of faith and of the many programs.<sup>42</sup> Immediately after, he applies this doctrine to the religious bodies in France after the Protestant Reformation. Calvinistic Protestantism, he says, did not entice many away from the Catholic Church; one reason for this he sees in the fact, that, altho faulty in many respects, the Catholic Church had the power to change its creed thru its popes and councils, and thus was capable of development.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> S.S., XIX, 278-279. In all his thinking, Strindberg never was satisfied with a point of view that he had acquired: he looked with suspicion on any definite and ready made system (cf. *Nordisk familjebok*, article on Strindberg, XXVII, col. 340).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Discours de la Méthode*, 21, where Descartes lays down as his first principle the acceptance of nothing as true which he does not know absolutely to be true. Strindberg overstates the negative side of Descartes' procedure.

<sup>42</sup> *Likt och olik*, II, S.S., XVII, 265.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.



Our author's ideas as set forth above, which were largely in agreement with the views of the new school of natural science represented by Darwin and his followers (or associates), were modified by that trend of nineteenth century philosophy which is termed pessimism.<sup>44</sup> The two exponents of this tendency that are of particular interest to us are Schopenhauer and Hartmann.

To the ideas of Hartmann, Strindberg was introduced in 1872. While at a friend's house, he happened to see a review of *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten* in the *Svensk tidskrift*. In the third volume of his autobiographical works, *I röda rummet* (1886), he describes the effect this review had on him.<sup>45</sup> In it, he found an idea, which, as he felt, had always been present in his mind in a subconscious state—that all conscious life is pain.<sup>46</sup> If he looked at life, he says, and especially at the march of history, he found only circles and repetitions of mistakes.<sup>47</sup> The modern man, he found, was dreaming of a republic, which the Greeks and the Romans had had two thousand

<sup>44</sup> It should be noted here that there is a pessimistic note in Buckle also. Cf. p. 5, above.

<sup>45</sup> It must be borne in mind that this account was written fourteen years after the original reading of the article; hence it no doubt partly represents later reflections on the subject. In fact, Strindberg himself acknowledges that the impression was a rather fleeting one.

"But a philosophy of life does not pour itself into the brain entirely at one time. And so it left in this case only certain precipitates and gave a dominating note. As a theoretical point of view it was still disturbed by his (i.e., Strindberg's) religious idealistic education, it was darkened by his inborn and acquired class hatred and his natural instinct of seeking balance outside of himself in life" (*S.S.*, XIX, 66).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 629 ff. and 695 ff., also *Svensk tidskrift*, 1872, p. 384.

<sup>47</sup> Evidently a reaction of Strindberg's rather than a theory of Hartmann's or an idea found in the review. This idea should, of course, be distinguished from Nietzsche's "return of the identical," which does not involve a repetition of events in our present existence.

years before; the civilization of the Egyptians had fallen to pieces when they had perceived life's nothingness; Asia was sleeping the eternal sleep after having been driven by an unconscious will to world conquests; all peoples had discovered anesthetics and intoxicants in order to extinguish consciousness; sleep was happiness and death the greatest fortune. The only thing that kept people from taking the last step and committing suicide, was the illusory hope of something better which the unconscious will incessantly held up before them.<sup>48</sup>

Pessimism, he goes on to say, as a mechanistic philosophy of life, is much more consistent than the transformistic philosophy which sees a development toward man's happiness in mechanical evolution. Is not the latter a retained and transformed Providence? Or can anyone believe, he asks, that the mechanical, blindly ruling natural laws work with a view to the progress of human society toward happiness, when they call forth glaciers, floods, volcanic eruptions; and is it right that an enlightened man should be called conservative in a derogatory sense because he finds it impossible to believe that man has conquered all the natural laws and is now ruling over them, as John Stuart Mill humorously says?<sup>49</sup>

History, the author continues, does not show a progress toward something better,<sup>50</sup> but merely returns to older positions. Thus, he says, if European society is now developing toward atheism, the Buddhists had it before; if toward religious liberty, that is found in a lower state in China; if toward collective property, that form was the oldest; if toward polygamy,

<sup>48</sup> S.S., XIX, 59-61. Cf. *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 638-736, also *Svensk tidskrift*, 1872, pp. 384-385.

<sup>49</sup> S.S., XIX, 61.

<sup>50</sup> Happiness, Hartmann says, does not increase with the progress of history, but he insists in opposition to Schopenhauer, that there is in history a definite organic development (*Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 337, also 715).

that is found among the cannibals in Australia; if toward metric land taxation to the exclusion of all other taxes, we can learn that from the Chinese.<sup>51</sup>

The name Schopenhauer was certainly known to Strindberg as early as 1870. In the chapter "Zerrissen" of *Jäsningstiden*, he tells of a very strange character who had been elected to the society "Runa" under the name of "Is." This new member, while presumably commenting on a poem read by one of the members, entered into irrelevant discussions of Kant, Schopenhauer, and other writers.<sup>52</sup> Both Schopenhauer and Hartmann must have been rather familiar to him by 1874, when he entered upon his duties in the Royal Library. In his third autobiographical volume, *I röda rummet* (1886), he tells of the humility he felt before the immense work of the human mind represented by the numerous volumes before him. Here he believed the riddles of life could be solved—the only question was, where should he begin? He went first to the philosophers, but in these he was disappointed; for no one, he says, had a word to add to what Schopenhauer and Hartmann had said.<sup>53</sup>

A more active interest in Hartmann is shown in 1877. In *Författaren* (1886), Strindberg tells how he and a number of kindred souls succeeded after much trouble in finding a publisher for the translation of Hartmann's philosophy,<sup>54</sup> which they did in collaboration while they met in the laboratory of a young physician.<sup>55</sup>

The two German philosophers are again mentioned in "Den litterära reaktionen i Sverige" (1886). Discussing the ideas

<sup>51</sup> S.S., XIX, 62. I have been unable to find this sentiment in Hartmann. It is rather in line with Schopenhauer's idea. Cf. p. 20, below.

<sup>52</sup> S.S., XVIII, 391-392.

<sup>53</sup> S.S., XIX, 120.

<sup>54</sup> The work referred to is, of course, *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten*. Cf. *Tillkomsten av Strindbergs "Mäster Olof,"* 20, footnote.

<sup>55</sup> S.S., XIX, 156-157.

holding sway in the seventies, Strindberg tells how some of the members of his generation had been driven to despair and had thrown themselves into the arms of Schopenhauer and Hartmann.<sup>56</sup>

But it was largely thru independent thinking,—still, no doubt, under the influence of the German philosophers—that Strindberg made the pessimistic philosophy his own. When preparing to write *Svenska folket* (1881), he spent about two months looking over the literature bearing on his subject and collecting all the material needed. He then intended to arrange this material according to some principle, making the events take the place of links in a chain. He found it difficult to discover any causal relationship. He arrived at the conclusion that things happen without any reasonable connection. History seemed a capricious jungle, a going around in a circle.<sup>57</sup> Civilization, he says, had grown up and perished; forms of society had appeared and disappeared; religions had changed; and yet man remained as unwise and as unhappy as ever.<sup>58</sup> Those who thought they had seen a connection, he argues, had probably seen only the desire of their own brain to place things in causal relationships.<sup>59</sup> Chance, he felt, is the thing that rules. "The

<sup>56</sup> *Likt och olik*, II, S.S., XVII, 213. In the original manuscript, Strindberg adds, "I had arrived at such a stage that I did not believe in a rational plan in the whole system, and this sentiment found its expression in the revision and epilog of *Måster Olof*" (*ibid.*, Anmärkningar, 323).

<sup>57</sup> The idea that there is no organic development in history is in line with Schopenhauer's theory. To him, "history shows on every side only the same under different forms. . . . The chapters of the history of nations are at the bottom only distinguished by the names and dates; the really essential is everywhere the same" (*The World as Will and Idea*, III, 223-224, also 227).

<sup>58</sup> Hartmann insists that with increasing intelligence man becomes unhappier (*Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 645).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Schopenhauer's statement . . . "only the life of each individual has unity, connection, and true significance. . . . Multiplicity is phe-

world is ruled by chance, tho by inevitable chance, which would not have come about if it had not been imposed by necessity."<sup>60</sup>

Four years later, we are told in *Författaren*, the author, urged on by disillusionment, tried to arrive at a philosophy of life. The field of his investigation was larger this time, but it included history, and the results were very nearly the same as they had been before. First, he adopted a kind of provisional atheism—we have no way of knowing that there is a God, he argued, because he has not manifested himself; and if he exists, it is better for the purposes of this world to ignore him.<sup>61</sup> Then he propounded to himself the question whether in the world as seen here on earth there can be traced any development toward a rational goal ("till förnuftighet") or toward human happiness. Without being frightened by God or even by Darwin (!), he says, he went thru the history of the world's creation and found movement, changes, disturbances, revolutions; but he failed to find any trace of the alleged unified forward-going development. For if any such thing had existed,

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nomenal, and external events are mere configurations of the phenomenal world, and have therefore directly neither reality nor significance, but only indirectly thru their relation to the wills of the individuals. The endeavor to explain and interpret them directly is accordingly like the endeavor to see in the forms of the clouds groups of men and animals. What history narrates is in fact only the long, heavy, and confused dream of humanity" (*The World as Will and Idea*, III, 225).

<sup>60</sup> S.S., XIX, 180. "Världen regerades nog av slumpar, om också av nödvändiga slumpar, vilka ej skulle inträffat, om de icke varit betingade av nödvändigheten."

<sup>61</sup> S.S., XIX, 243. This is the very opposite attitude from that taken, for instance, by Kant, who demonstrates the impossibility of proving the existence of God (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, 470-502), but assumes his existence for practical reasons (*Prolegomena*, §§ 57-58, particularly § 58, p. 118). Cf. also Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, 639-641.



he contends, the entire vegetable kingdom would first have gone thru the scale of evolution and then the lowest animal succeeded upon the highest plant. Nor was he able to find that in either the animal or the vegetable kingdom the later specimens and formations are of a higher order than the earlier ones. They are merely different. It was all confusion, a mere question of succession in time, consequent accidents, caprices imposed by necessity, but no carefully planned creation.<sup>62</sup>

He then turned to human history. In this also he saw the unorganized rule of chance ("oorganiserat slumpiv").<sup>63</sup> Among men, he says, the development had been so uneven, that some were still cannibals, others lived on herbs, others on meat, others on insects, and still others on a mixed diet. In the same way, he found a multitude of civilizations, of forms of society, religions, philosophies. Antiquity had in certain ways been ahead of the present, and Christianity had come afterwards as a single big reaction. At first, he says, people had fought, then they cheated each other. For that reason all society was built on conventional lies and on tacit agreement that people were to practice deception.<sup>64</sup> Egyptian civilization had perished and the country was still held in slavery. Palestinian civilization had perished; and the Turks, in spite of the crusades of three hundred years, still possessed the grave of Christ. Greek civilization had perished, and the country was lying waste like a desert. Roman civilization had fallen before the barbarians as soon as it was ripe. It was always the barbarian who conquered, whether he descended on Palestine, as the Turk; or on Hellas, as the Macedonian; or on Rome, as the Goth.<sup>65</sup> Civil-

<sup>62</sup> S.S., XIX, 243-244.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. above, p. 20, footnote 57.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 722-724.

<sup>65</sup> We find an echo of this idea, that the barbarian always wins, in "Förord till Giftras, andra delen" (1886). Here we are told that when the Chinese immigrated to America, the Americans knew that a struggle

zation, then, Strindberg argues, is not adapted to the preservation of the race. In the last Franco-Prussian war, the German conquered because he was more of a barbarian than the Frenchman, and Europe's next barbarian after the German will perhaps be the Russian. It was not the philosophy of the German that conquered the last time, not his science, but the remainder of his earlier barbarism, which induced him to occupy himself with such a science as that of war. "He did not have love, nor faith either, but he had the guns." The strongest, then, not the best educated, not the man of fine sensibility, not the man of love, is the victor. Everything was the same in the old world, much had changed, but hardly developed to anything more reasonable; and God surely was not at Sedan, where a civilization had perished.<sup>66</sup>

Here follows an arraignment of what Strindberg calls Darwinian<sup>67</sup> idealism—i.e., the theory that all development is for the better—similar to the one we found expressed in connection with the Hartmann review in *Svensk tidskrift* (see pp. 17 ff., above). As a modern spirit, he says, he was looked upon as a

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with them would be hopeless, not because they were superior, but because they had different moral standards. With the dishonest one, Strindberg says, the honest one will always draw the shorter straw (*Efterslätter*, S.S., LIV, 261). The theme is again touched upon in *Författaren* (1886), in what purports to be a conversation from the same year. In the fight of labor for a new social order, Strindberg represents himself as saying in this dialog that he sees a struggle not for socialism but for anarchy, the open struggle for existence in which the stronger is to rule. We are too highly educated, or too weak, to use the same barbarous methods as they; therefore we shall perish, and with us civilization (S.S., XIX, 284).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-245.

<sup>67</sup> Darwinian is of course used here as a generic term denoting the entire evolutionary school rather than referring to Darwin's particular views. The optimism referred to here is found, not in Darwin, but in those who developed his system.



conservative if he did not believe in the Darwinian theory of the origin of species, which had been raised to a liberal theology, and, what is worse, if he did not believe in the application which the post-idealists ("efteridealisterna") had made of this to the development of human history. Had not the latter, he asked, reinstated in its old place Divine Providence when they said that what existed now was the best there could be and better than what preceded merely because it was later? Did they believe, then, that 1820 in France was better than 1790; and was really Napoleon the First's reign better than Louis the Sixteenth's? Is it not possible that we are living in a period of retrogression in which the retrogression is a development backward? Why, if there is a development toward human happiness as an inherent law, does every effort toward reform meet with universal opposition?<sup>68</sup>

In *Jäsningstiden* (1886), Strindberg again attacks the idea of the evolutionists, that everything that is in evolution or movement is going forward for the welfare of humanity. As a proof that this idea is wrong he cites the fact that even a disease develops toward a crisis, recovery or death.<sup>69</sup>

From what has been said it is clear that this theory of a lack of order and purpose in history was with him merely a particular application of a general system of philosophy. He applies the same principle to botany and mineralogy. In "Blomstrens hemligheter" (1888) he suggests that perhaps development is merely motion, forward or backward, indifferent change, and the laws of nature merely subjective perceptions of our brains, which love order and wish to find a purpose everywhere.<sup>70</sup> The same idea is expressed in *I havsbandet* (1890)

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>69</sup> S.S., XVIII, 245.

<sup>70</sup> *Prosabitar från 1880-talet*, S.S., XXII, 266. It may be noted that this idea is parallel to Schopenhauer's idea of history. Cf. above, pp. 20-21, footnotes 57 and 59. On the other hand, it differs from

by the fishing superintendent, who realizes that it is not the stones that are arranged in order by nature, but that it is the brain that arranges the phenomena.<sup>71</sup>

### SUMMARY

Strindberg's earlier conception of history covering approximately the period 1870-1890, was in general that of the modern school<sup>72</sup>—called in Germany "die genetische", or "die entwickelnde Schule," and was influenced by the new methods that had gained a foothold in the field of natural science.<sup>73</sup> In general,

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contemporary scientific theory, which while regarding the "laws of nature" as subjective, i.e., existent in the mind rather than in nature, nevertheless assumes that those laws are the most convenient ways of expressing relationships in nature and hence have their roots in nature itself—the very thing that Strindberg denies.

<sup>71</sup> S.S., XXIV, 60.

<sup>72</sup> Modern historians differ on minor points and on their approach to history. However, the modern tendencies in historiography are not "in all cases mutually exclusive, but are rather, to a large degree, supplementary" (Harry Elmer Barnes, "History, Its Rise and Development," *Encyclopedia Americana*, xiv, p. 258). Moreover most of them agree on the large essentials of historical interpretation, hence we may speak, in general, of a modern school of historians.

<sup>73</sup> Stavenow says that the new method came into existence with the Romantic School (*Nordisk familjebok*, XI, col. 773). The German Romanticists received from Herder the idea of the organic evolution of human history and gave it further development (Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, I, 11 ff. Cf. also Barnes, *loc. cit.*, p. 232). No doubt, also, the study of folk lore and the heightened enthusiasm for the past which characterized this school both in Germany and in the North increased the interest in the history of nations as entities and in large cultural movements. Nevertheless, the new historical method is essentially that of the Naturalistic School in literature, which was also influenced by the new science. We should remember that this school came into being in the forties (Mortensen, *Från Röda rummet till skelskiftet*, I, 24), and that the discoveries of Wöhler and Mayer go back to the twenties and forties respectively, and in particular that Lamarck propounded his

we may point out the following influences, having constantly in mind the reservations made at the beginning of this chapter.

Strindberg came under the influence of Buckle in 1872. In him he found the following ideas. The fundamental basis of life is material; the mental and spiritual forces are conditioned by the physical. The object of our inquiry should be, therefore, physical laws. Knowledge rather than moral qualities should be our aim; doubt is the great factor in human progress. Every event is the inevitable result of certain pre-existing factors; this theory, of course, by implication denies the freedom of the human will.

With the name and ideas of Darwin, our author became superficially acquainted in 1870. By 1877 he was well acquainted with Darwin's theory of the origin of species; he made use of one of his ideas, he tells us, in 1879. The chief historical idea that he derived, directly or indirectly, from Darwin and the evolutionary school was that of continued development.

It is impossible from the material at hand to determine when Strindberg became acquainted with Spencer's ideas. His mention of him in 1886 shows a thoro appreciation of his work. In Spencer, he found the idea that man is the product, rather than the maker of his times. This is expressed as a theory in *Svenska folket* in 1881. Another idea that he found in Spencer was that of the relativity of truth, which, however, he had also found in Buckle.

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doctrine of biological development similar to Darwin's as early as the beginning of the century (*ibid.*, I, 6-8). It should also be noted that the Romantic School emphasized the individual rather than the race (cf. pp. 10-11, above), and that it imbued history with a sense of mysticism (cf. Barnes, *loc. cit.*, p. 232) not found in Strindberg during the period under discussion, nor, in general, in modern historians.

Strindberg's ideas as set forth above, were modified by a nineteenth century trend of philosophy known as pessimism, largely under the influence of Hartmann and Schopenhauer. His acquaintance with the ideas of Hartmann was effected indirectly in 1872. Schopenhauer's name was familiar to him in 1870. By 1874, he must have been well acquainted with the two philosophers; in 1877, he collaborated in a translation of Hartmann. In 1881, he confirmed for himself thru independent thinking the pessimistic philosophy of the two Germans, and his ideas were strengthened by a similar process in 1885.

In Hartmann, he found the idea that the progress of the world instead of increasing man's happiness made him more unhappy. In 1881, when preparing to write *Svenska folket*, he arrived at the same conclusion as Schopenhauer with reference to history, a conclusion contrary not only to that of the scientific historians, but also to Hartmann's, that there is no regular organic development in history. In 1885, he applies the same principle to organic and inorganic nature. This brings his ideas in direct conflict with those of the evolutionists, who believed, not only that there is a definite organic development in human life and in nature, but also that this development is one of constant progress toward something higher.

It was stated above that Strindberg's conception of history during this period is largely in line with the modern school of historical thought. The central idea of this school is that of development.<sup>74</sup> "Die genetische"—or "entwickelnde Geschichtsphilosophie" requires that one consider historic events as a series of evolutions closely connected with each other, says Bernheim. Three different elements enter into this conception. First, there must be a conception of the unity of the human race; secondly, the different actions of men must be considered as in close reciprocal relation with each other and with physical conditions; thirdly, there must be a realization of the fact that

<sup>74</sup> Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 10-11.

there is going on in all human relationships a constant change.<sup>75</sup> The first of these ideas is the natural consequence of the theory of the individual's dependence on the race, which has been discussed in this chapter, and that of Sweden as an integral part of Europe, which will be discussed in Chapter II; the other two are also found either implied or expressed in Strindberg's historical theories of this period.

Bernheim leaves the question of the freedom of the human will as an open one.<sup>76</sup> Stavenow assumes both a certain necessity imposed by conditions and a certain degree of freedom on the part of the human will;<sup>77</sup> history, he says, must premise both of these factors; the relation between them is one of the most difficult problems of speculative thought. Each historian, he says, emphasizes one or the other, according to his own individuality. Later in his article, however, Stavenow recognizes the fact that within the modern method different tendencies will be found, according as, for instance, "the freedom of the human will is affirmed or denied."<sup>78</sup> Strindberg, as we have seen, denied with Buckle the freedom of the human will.

On the question of progress toward something better, Bernheim states that this is denied only by those who consider all civilization a fall from primitive perfection, or by those who interpret phenomena as mere results of accidents.<sup>79</sup> The natural conclusion seems to be that the modern school believes in a development towards something better. In this case, then, Strindberg was opposed to the school, as well as in his denial of law and order.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-36.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 739-740.

<sup>77</sup> This is very much like Strindberg's conception of the relation of the Conscious Will to the will of man in "Världshistoriens mystik." See p. 80, below.

<sup>78</sup> *Nordisk familjebok*, article on "Historia," vol. XI, col. 773.

<sup>79</sup> *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 741.

Finally, it may be said that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to reconcile Strindberg's Darwinian views with some of his pessimistic theories. In fact, due to the complexity of his thinking and the non-sequential character of some of it, any attempt to reduce his ideas to a definite philosophic system would be futile.



## CHAPTER II

### STRINDBERG'S HISTORICAL MONISM<sup>1</sup>

The most important element in Strindberg's conception of history, as well as in his philosophy in general, is his monism. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how far this has influenced his historical theories. The different ideas that go to make up this monistic conception are treated topically, but under each topic the ideas are treated chronologically, so far as this is possible. For comparative purposes this chapter opens with a brief review of his monistic theories in other fields.

#### STRINDBERG'S GENERAL MONISTIC TENDENCIES

The term monism is used in this chapter and in general in this study in the sense given it by Hibben, i.e., as "the theory of being which recognizes but one sort of essence in everything, however manifold may seem the variety of nature's manifestations." Hibben then subdivides monism into three distinct forms:

- "(a) Materialism, which regards mind as a form or product of matter.
- (b) Spiritualism, which regards matter as a form or product of mind.
- (c) The identity theory, which regards matter and mind

<sup>1</sup> As a basis for this chapter, the following works have been used: *Svenska folket, Likt och olikt, Utopier i verkligheten, Jäsningstiden, Författaren, I havsbandet, Prosabitar från 1890-talet, Inferno, Legender, Götiska rummen, En blå bok, I, II, III, Svarta fanor, Språkvetenskapliga studier, Tal till svenska nationen, Efterslätter* (including "Världshistoriens mystik").



as different phases in the manifestation of one and the same being, which is itself neither matter nor mind."<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that Strindberg's earlier views were materialistic; but at the time of those studies which gave particular prominence to his monistic views, he clearly belongs to those who accept the third theory. To this class belongs Herbert Spencer,<sup>3</sup> while Haeckel is usually considered as belonging to the materialistic<sup>4</sup> school. In referring to his monism, Strindberg appeals to these two. "I am a transformist like Darwin and a monist like Spencer and Haeckel," he says in 1896 in the "*Jardin des Plantes*."<sup>5</sup>

As has been suggested above, his monistic interpretation of history is only a particular application of a general philosophic theory which runs thru all his thinking. It will be of interest, therefore, before examining this doctrine as applied to history, to note how it finds expression in other fields.<sup>6</sup>

In chemistry, Strindberg's monistic tendency finds expression chiefly in a belief in the existence of one original element from which all the so-called simple elements have developed by splitting, condensation, rarefaction, copulation, crossing, etc., as he writes in 1895. Those, he says, who believe in sixty-four elements, cling to the old doctrine of a series of creative acts,

<sup>2</sup> Hibben, *Problems of Philosophy*, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Spencer, *First Principles*, 558-559.

<sup>4</sup> Hibben, *Problems of Philosophy*, 47. Mortensen, however, classes Haeckel with those who favor the identity theory (*Från Röda rummet till sekelskiftet*, I, 9).

<sup>5</sup> *Prosabitar från 1890-talet*, S.S., XXVII, 298. Helmecke sees in Strindberg's monism a proof of the influence of Buckle (*Buckle's Influence on Strindberg*, 48). I cannot agree with this. When Strindberg's definitely monistic tendencies begin to assert themselves, his interest in Buckle is already on the wane.

<sup>6</sup> No attempt has been made to determine the correctness of Strindberg's scientific opinions or to call attention to discrepancies in cases where his premises are at variance with modern scientific theory.

one for each kind, when it is a question of chemistry, altho they deny this doctrine in the field of botany and zoology.<sup>7</sup> The same idea is expressed in his "Introduction à une chimie unitaire," written and published in Paris in 1895, which bears the motto, "Omnia in omnibus, omne omne est." Here the author explains the difference between the various chemical elements as produced by division, combination, condensation, rarefaction, joining, substitution, commutation.<sup>8</sup>

In order to prove his one-element theory, he attempts to show that some of the supposedly simple elements contain others. In the *Inferno*, he tells how he proved that sulphur contains carbon. The lack of the necessary apparatus prevented him from continuing his experiments long enough to prove the existence of hydrogen and oxygen.<sup>9</sup> Later, he found that this had already been proved by Davy and Berthollet.<sup>10</sup>

The natural conclusion of the theory that all elements are fundamentally one, is the transmutation of elements, and, incidentally, the transmutation of other metals into gold. This problem occupied much of Strindberg's time. In the *Inferno*, he tells of his attempts in 1896 to produce gold from lead and silicon, only, however, with partial success. A year later (1897), he tells us, an enamel ("glasyr") of lead and silicon was brought him by a friend; and from this enamel he produced a mineralized gold of rare beauty.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Antibarbarus," *Prosabitar från 1890-talet*, S.S., XXVII, 139. "Klyvning, förtätning, förtunning, kopulation, krossning och så vidare." Strindberg is not willing to name the original element, altho he suggests that it may be hydrogen. Later he says that just as there is one kind of electricity with two different poles, so probably oxygen and hydrogen are expressions of the same power inherent in all substances (*ibid.*, 193).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 303. "Scission, agglomération, condensation, atténuation. polymérisation, substitution, commutation."

<sup>9</sup> S.S., XXVIII, 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

As an example of the direct change of one element into another, our author cites what he considers a transmutation of arsenic into sulphur. In *En blå bok*, III (1908), he says that if  $\text{As}_2\text{S}_2$  is exposed to sunlight, it changes to  $\text{As}_2\text{S}_3$ , and that its composition is changed from 69% of As and 31% of S to 61% of As and 39% of S; in other words, 8% of the arsenic turns to sulphur.<sup>12</sup>

Strindberg's monistic tendency shows itself often in a desire to do away with all classifications and distinctions. One of these distinctions is that between matter and mind. In this connection, there is a passage of special interest in "Anti-barbarus" (1893), where he treats the ontogeny of sulphur. Here he speaks with approval of the ideas of the earlier scientists. "These members of a former generation still possessed a certain respect for matter, attributed to it a measure of soul or formative impulse ("bilddrift"), looked more at the characteristics of the bodies and from the expressions of activity ("verksamhetsyttringarne") drew their conclusions as to quality."<sup>13</sup>

Four years later, he discusses the genesis of "Antibarbarus." People in general, he says, called themselves monists, tho incorrectly. Since they all recognized in theory the unity of matter, he carried this doctrine to its logical conclusion and eliminated as far as possible the distinction between matter and

<sup>12</sup> S.S., XLVIII, 987-988. It may be of interest to note that John Landin, who discussed Strindberg's chemical theories in *Stockholms Dagblad* (October 13 and 20, 1896), and in *Norden* (Oct. 23 and 30, 1896), considers them based ultimately on the Anaximander-Aristotle theory of an indefinite original substance ("en bestämingslös urmateria"). Landin justifies the space that he gives to Strindberg's theories by saying that with all his extravagant notions, Strindberg still gives expression in a very forceful way to a doubt of the real or ultimate simplicity of the chemical elements which even the orthodox chemist must feel (S.S., XXVII, 709-710).

<sup>13</sup> *Prosabitar från 1890-talet*, S.S., XXVII, 134.

what is called spirit.<sup>14</sup> And so, in "Antibarbarus",<sup>15</sup> he traced the psychology of sulphur, which he later changed to its ontogeny, i.e., its embryonic development.<sup>16</sup>

In line with the idea just mentioned is that of obliterating the line of demarcation between the animal and the vegetable kingdom. In the "Jardin des Plantes" he suggests that possibly the plants were once animals, and as an illustration of what their development may have been, he cites the history of the ascidian. This, he says, was originally a vertebrate, but developed into a tunicate, struck a kind of root and enveloped itself in the cellulose covering of the plant. The plants are not lower than the animals; furthermore, they have, as is universally recognized, in common with the animals, the five functions—nutrition, digestion, circulation, respiration, and reproduction.<sup>17</sup> In addition they have nerves.<sup>18</sup>

This attitude naturally led him to the investigation of such subjects as the psychology of plants. In *En blå bok* III (1908) Strindberg says on the authority of Elias Fries,<sup>19</sup> that when a deciduous wood is burned and the ground used for grazing, pine trees grow; but if this grazing ground is then fenced in, deciduous trees will grow there again. He offers as a possible explanation the theory that the enclosure gives a feeling of security altho it does not really protect, since there are gates which can be opened and cattle which may enter. Is it this feeling of security, he asks, that causes deciduous trees to thrive on fenced ground?<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In 1907, Strindberg expresses the opinion that the identity or similarity of physical and psychic laws is a natural conclusion of the doctrine of monism (*Svarta fanor*, S.S., XLI, 202-203).

<sup>15</sup> On the title page of "Antibarbarus" the date of its composition is given as 1893; in the passage referred to above it is given as 1894.

<sup>16</sup> S.S., XXVIII, 35.

<sup>17</sup> "Jardin des Plantes," S.S., XXVII, 247-249.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 251-260.

<sup>19</sup> Elias Fries (1794-1878), Swedish botanist, was a pupil of Linné.

<sup>20</sup> S.S., XLVIII, 963.

Strindberg also wanted to obliterate the distinction between the organic and the inorganic. To prove his contention that they are essentially one, he cites the petrification of trees in North America. He also calls attention to the fact that birds eat sand and that sheep in case of need eat clay. "Why then," he asks, "this stubborn distinction between organic and inorganic, when nature does not divide as rigidly as the laboratory experimentalists?"<sup>21</sup>

He was confirmed in this opinion by the similarities which he observed between organic and inorganic matter. Thus he noted that the figures made by hoar-frost resembled certain herbs.<sup>22</sup> Once he saw the figures made by condensed steam on a shop window and noted that they were like plants, and, what is more, that the figures at the top, where the condensation had been the least, were like the lowest plants. As he went downward toward greater condensation, he found the higher types of herbs depicted. While making this observation, he thought of the theory of some German philosopher, whom he does not name, who derived everything thru the formula of condensation and rarefaction.<sup>23</sup>

To substantiate further the theory that the organic and the inorganic are essentially one, he argues that some metals exist in both organic and inorganic form. As an example of this, he cites copper. Orfila,<sup>24</sup> he says, contended that the human body, particularly the liver, always contains this metal, which can be set free by boiling in distilled water. On the other hand, the French scientist asserted that the copper brought into the body artificially cannot be set free by boiling in water. It can be recovered only by burning the body to ashes and then treat-

<sup>21</sup> "Jardin des Plantes," *S.S.*, XXVII, 213.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>24</sup> M. J. B. Orfila, French chemist, physician, and toxicologist, 1787-1853.



ing it with a strong acid.<sup>25</sup> A similar statement, Strindberg contends, was made by Lemery<sup>26</sup> and others during the seventeenth century about the iron which may always be found in the ashes of plants, but never in the plants themselves.<sup>27</sup> These two metals—copper and iron—he declares are found in indigo, altho they do not give the regular copper and iron reactions.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps one of the boldest conclusions of Strindberg's monistic doctrines is the suggestion, made in 1908, of the possible transmutation of plants. He states on the authority of Fries, that *Dipsacus pilosus* grows in places around Lund and Ystad where *Xanthium* used to grow. "Is it the same plant that has been transformed?" he asks.<sup>29</sup>

In the field of philology, his monism finds expression in a desire to prove the original unity of all language.<sup>30</sup> This he considers the only logical conclusion of the doctrine of the essential unity of things in the field of natural science.<sup>31</sup> In the study of languages, as in other studies, he opposes rigid classifications. Thus he objects to considering agglutination as characteristic of Finno-Turanian. It exists in all languages, he says. As an example in Swedish, he cites the passive *kallas* (to be called) from *kallasik* (to call oneself). "I can, therefore," he says, "find no justification for isolating and classifying the languages since all are in all."<sup>32</sup> In the field of seman-

<sup>25</sup> "Jardin des Plantes," S.S., XXVII, 269-270.

<sup>26</sup> Nicholas Lemery, (1645-1715), French chemist, lecturer at Montpellier; author of several treatises.

<sup>27</sup> S.S., XXVII, 270.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>29</sup> S.S., XLVII, 962.

<sup>30</sup> Thus he calls attention to the fact that Hebrew is related to Greek and Latin, hence to all the so-called Indo-Germanic languages (S.S., LII, 7). He shows similarities between Japanese and Greek (*ibid.*, 61), and connects Swedish words with those of other languages (S.S., LIII, 151 ff.).

<sup>31</sup> S.S., LII, 399.

<sup>32</sup> S.S., XLVII, 594.

tics, the theory of the essential unity of languages is carried to its logical conclusion in the statement made on the authority of E. Meier (*Wurzelwörterbuch der Hebreischen Sprache*)<sup>33</sup> that all stems ending in B. P. F. V. M. have the primary meaning, gather, unite; and all the others, the meaning, disintegrate, separate, divide. Attention is called, however, to the fact that the meanings do not constitute absolute antitheses, but shade off into each other by degrees.<sup>34</sup>

Our author's monistic philosophy finds expression also in a tendency toward finding similarities everywhere. In "En blick mot rymden" (1896), he tells of seeing colored pictures of the interior of the eye, and of being amazed at finding their resemblance to the solar system.<sup>35</sup> A little later in the same article, another case of similarity is cited. In his earlier reading, his attention had been called by Elias Fries to the close resemblance of the sunflower to the sun, a thought which he recalled in 1895 when he read Bernardin de St. Pierre's *Harmonies de la Nature*. St. Pierre points out that the trees stand in direct relationship with the sun by their concentric rings, one of which is added for every circling of the sun, while the moon seems to exercise its influence on the herbs—thus the garden plants have one ring for every month of their existence.<sup>36</sup> "We have seen resemblances everywhere," he says at the end of the

<sup>33</sup> Strindberg's spelling.

<sup>34</sup> S.S., LII, 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> S.S., XXVII, 354.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358. Cf. *Les Harmonies de la Nature*, I, 45-46. In addition to showing, as he does in this passage, that there are certain similarities or correspondences in nature between different objects, St. Pierre shows in this work that all things in nature are in harmonious relations with each other and are well adapted to their several purposes (cf. for instance the chapter on "Harmonies aériennes des végétaux" in I, 364 ff.). Both of these ideas are found transferred to the field of history in "Världshistoriens mystik." There is, however, no evidence of direct influence.



article, "for the reason that similarities and harmonies ("överensstämmelser") exist everywhere;<sup>37</sup> and those who say that they believe in the unity of matter and spirit agree with us, do they not?"<sup>38</sup>

This idea influenced Strindberg's conception of poetry. In *En blå bok* I (1906), he has the "Teacher" say that the essence of poetry consists in finding what Swedenborg<sup>39</sup> calls correspondences in different planes; therefore, he says, the figure of speech called metaphor is of extreme importance.<sup>40</sup> Hence Tegnér<sup>41</sup> is the greatest of Swedish poets, and in particular greater than Runeberg.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> On this basis, the "Disciple" compares a walnut and the brain (S.S., XLVI, 218-220).

<sup>38</sup> S.S., XXVII, 354.

<sup>39</sup> Swedenborg, mentioned particularly in Chapter III, exerted a very great influence on Strindberg. One of his theories was that everything in the physical world has a counterpart or "correspondence" in the spiritual world. For instance, he explains in the ten volumes of *Arcana Cælestia* the narratives of Genesis and Exodus as allegories on the basis of a system of "correspondences."

<sup>40</sup> It is interesting to note the change that took place in Strindberg's mind in the appreciation of parallelism as a poetic device. In 1885, when writing *Utopier i verkligheten*, he speaks of the utopian future as the time when poetry, "the play with words," will be done away with. All that poetry is, he goes on to say, is comparison. It cannot picture anything to us that we have not seen before (*Utopier i verkligheten*, S.S., XV, 169). Olle Holmberg attributes to a Strindberg investigator, whom he does not name, the statement that the Swedish author did not learn to appreciate Tegnér's style, replete as it is with metaphors, until he had become an adherent of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences ("Till metaforernas metafysik," *Nordisk Tidskrift*, 1924, p. 75, footnote).

<sup>41</sup> Esaias Tegnér (1782-1846), bishop, university professor, and poet; one of the great figures in Swedish literature, known especially for his *Frithjofs saga*.

<sup>42</sup> S.S., XLVI, 207. J. L. Runeberg (1804-1877), one of the most famous among the Swedish poets of Finland.

## SWEDEN AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EUROPE

Having examined briefly Strindberg's monistic views in some other fields, let us now turn to his monistic conception in history.

The first germ of this conception is to be found in that interpretation of history, expressed as a theory in 1881, which considers the individual as the product rather than the maker of his times, and views the "great man" as the outcome of the co-operation of an entire generation.<sup>43</sup> For, seeing society as an organic whole rather than as the aggregate of unrelated individuals, is the first step toward that conception which sees in world history a single body into which the histories of different countries fit as integral parts of an organic whole.

The next step toward this monism is found in his conception of Sweden as an integral part of Europe. In this conception we find two distinct elements: one is a reaction against that patriotism which exalts everything Swedish above anything else; the other is a protest against considering Sweden as an entity by itself, rather than as a part of a greater whole. Often these two elements are combined, and no attempt will be made to separate them.

The idea of Swedish dependence on other countries is advanced as an historical theory in the preface to *Svenska folket*.<sup>44</sup> Much space is devoted to the national costume, the furniture of the common people, and the folksong. The author shows that each of these originated, not among the common people, as is ordinarily supposed, but among the higher classes; and these, he claims, had generally obtained them abroad. In the case of the folksong, he illustrates this theory by several examples. It should be noted that Strindberg here seems some-

<sup>43</sup> Cf. pp. 10-13, above.

<sup>44</sup> This work is treated more in detail in the different sections of Part II.

what reluctant to acknowledge Sweden's dependence on other countries. "One must admit with sorrow," he says, "that the remark of the poet that barbarism alone was once national, is more than an empty phrase."<sup>45</sup>

This hesitation, however, has entirely disappeared three years later, when he has learned to view this dependence as a natural and normal fact. In *Likt och olik*, I, in the article "Nationalitet och svenskhet" (1884), he presents the idea of Sweden as an integral part of Europe as a well matured theory. As this article is of some importance, it will be necessary to give it an extended analysis.

Strindberg begins by saying that the purpose of his article is to show that the Swede is a European with European rights and duties; in doing so, he continues, he wishes to emphasize the fact that the Swede, if he wishes to develop into a citizen of the world, must first of all abandon his narrow ideas about the great advantages of being a Swede. This does not mean, however, that he should allow any other nation to devour him, nor that he should out of vanity abandon the habits and customs which nature and climate have fostered, nor that he should accept the glittering little faults of foreign nations in exchange for his own real virtues.

"My article is therefore," he says, "in all kindliness a protest against the harmful patriotism which hinders progress by continually holding up our great heroes from past ages of violence as patterns for our youth, which claims to find in what is Scandinavian something distinctive that is to separate the Northern from the Germanic races and hinder that combination which alone can prevent an annexation and which is desirable as a goal for the future."<sup>46</sup>

To prove the intimate relationship between Sweden and the rest of Europe, he cites the following facts. The Swede is

<sup>45</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 3-9.

<sup>46</sup> *S.S.*, XVI, 143-144.

more of a European than the citizens of other European nations. He reads French, German, and English; makes his selections from among the literatures and the philosophies of these countries, and appropriates what is best in each.

The Swedish race, he goes on to say, is a mixture of Celts, Frisians, and Goths; the ecclesiastical law of Sweden is Roman; the civil laws are Germanic;<sup>47</sup> the courts have been German and French; the higher education is Roman. The Swede likes the Frenchman better than he does the German; probably because he is not exclusively a Teuton himself, just as the French nation is not exclusively French, but a mixture of Romans, West Goths, Celts, Franks, and Scandinavians.<sup>48</sup> The history of the development of Sweden is so universally European that when a Swede, seized by the feeling of nationalism, seeks to collect the monuments of the past, he merely finds traces of the civilizations of the world.<sup>49</sup>

To exemplify the close relationship between Swedish culture and that of other countries, Strindberg relates the impression that Stockholm made on a Japanese to whom he wanted to show a Swedish city. This Oriental had been educated in Italy, Germany, France, and England, and so was in a manner a thoro European. He found the dress of the people and the buildings similar to those found in any other European city; the royal palace he characterized as Italian; the Riddarholm church, as a Gothic pagoda; the national museum reminded him of some Venetian-Florentine palace. From all of this the Japanese arrived at the conclusion that the Swede is a European with Euro-

<sup>47</sup> . . . "hela hans bildning ifrån lands- och stadslagarna är germanisk" (*ibid.*, 156).

<sup>48</sup> "Orsaken må väl sökas däri, att Svensken icke är så exklusiv german och Fransmannen icke så exklusiv (utom i vissa fall) fransman. Frankrikes befolkning är ju en blandras av romare, västgoter, kelter, franker och nordmän" (*ibid.*, 155).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-156.

pean education and European prejudices. But he was unable to see anything distinctively Swedish, a fact which did not surprise him, since, as Strindberg says, civilization is an endless co-operation.<sup>50</sup>

Strindberg sees an instance of this cooperation in the fact that Sweden has contributed to the common store house thru men like Linne, Berzelius, and John Ericsson, all of whom in turn had borrowed their ideas from men of other nationalities.<sup>51</sup>

With the ideas of the Japanese as a starting point, he notes the following facts concerning Sweden: the Swedes are of Asiatic origin; Sanskrit is the mother of Swedish as well as of Greek. In religion, the worship of Thor corresponds to that of the Indian God called by the Celtic Druids "Taram" (the Thunderer). To this worship belong the traditions of elves and brownies still common in Sweden.<sup>52</sup> The antiquities found in Sweden, he asserts, are in general like those found elsewhere in Europe. Kreüger has shown the existence of an Aryan element in Swedish family and communal institutions.<sup>53</sup> Swedish thought has been greatly influenced by foreign forces: its religion is Jewish; its Bible, Hebrew-Greek; it was under the mediate guardianship of the Roman Popes from 1152 to 1527; it was converted thru foreign missionaries (Anscar, Sigfried, Stefan), who influenced Swedish civilization to a great extent.<sup>54</sup> As further proofs of his point, our author cites the Europeanizing influence of knighthood, introduced in the days of the Folkungs; the foreign character of the rulers and the Scandinavian character of the country, caused by the union of Kalmar; the German educational influence incident to the Reformation; and the extended foreign relationships caused by the Thirty Years'

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-159.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-161.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

War. The influence of foreign scholars during the reign of Christina and the European—especially French—character of the culture during the Age of Liberty are also mentioned. Finally our attention is called to the influence in the nineteenth century of German romanticism and German philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

We now come to a number of scattered utterances found in Strindberg's second autobiographical volume, *Jäsningstiden* (1886), and in the article "Aktiebolaget Sverige" (1886).

In the first of these, *Jäsningstiden*, the author denies the existence of any purely Swedish education. In the first chapter, he gives some impressions he received while attending the university of Uppsala in 1867. Among other things, he states that in general all the lectures were based on material taken from abroad, mostly from Germany; that the text books in most subjects were written in German or in French; and that most of the dissertations were poor compilations from German sources. This, he goes on to say, was not peculiar to that particular time; for there is no such thing as a distinctively Swedish education any more than there is an education distinctively Belgian, Swiss, or Hungarian.<sup>56</sup> He likewise denies the existence of any characteristically Swedish philosophy. In the chapter "Förbundet Runa" (*Jäsningstiden*), he discusses the Boström philosophy. The idea of producing a Swedish philosophy, as Boström's philosophy was supposed to be, he characterizes as an absurdity, since doing so means to tear loose from the great mother branch which grows inland and merely sends out seeds to the hard ground of the northern peninsula. Boström, he continues, grew out of Kant and Hegel, was watered by Biberg and Grubbe, and at last produced a few independent shoots. But the fundamental idea of his philosophy he seems to have derived from the pantheism of Krause. Calling Boström an original philosopher is nothing but "village patriotism."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-165.

<sup>56</sup> *S.S.*, XVIII, 242. Cf. also *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 347-348.



In "Aktiebolaget Sverige" (1886), he returns to the subject of the composite character of the Swedish race already referred to, and to the earlier dependence on Rome. If nationality means race or tribe, he says, then Sweden is not a nation. If a business firm is a union of interests, then Sweden is a business firm. The executive director, the king, he says, is a Frenchman, at times a Norwegian, tho for everyday purposes, Swedish; and he may, in addition, be engaged in Prussian and Russian war service as honorary colonel. The directress is German. Strindberg even raises the question whether she can speak Swedish. Sweden's greatest man is a Finlander (Nordenskiöld); Sweden's richest man, a Scotchman (Dickson); Sweden's foremost statesman was a Walloon (Louis de Geer); her first poet, a Pole (Snoilsky); her most fashionable historian, an Austrian (Geijer); etc. Three fourths of the Swedish nobility, he continues, are Germans, and the country is at present ruled by Danes (Scanian husbandmen). Finally, three hundred years ago all clergymen were Roman subjects.<sup>58</sup>

Of particular interest for a study of Strindberg's conception of Sweden as an integral part of Europe, are two articles in the nature of somewhat detailed scientific investigations written in 1890 and found in *Prosabitar från 1890-talet*.

One of these entitled "Spanska-portugisiska minnen ur svenska historien" deals with the relations between the Iberian peninsula and Sweden. In this article, the author suggests the probable existence of blood relationships between the Visigoths who under Walla founded the kingdom in Spain and the Goths who settled in southern and middle Scandinavia.<sup>59</sup> The first definite relationship between the Iberian peninsula and Scandinavia appears as an historic fact in the year 843, when Scandi-

<sup>58</sup> *Efterslätter*, S.S., LIV, 241-242. For other instances of the conception of the Catholic Church as a bond uniting Sweden with the rest of Europe, cf. pp. 68-69, below.

<sup>59</sup> S.S., XXVII, 67.

navians landed in Asturia, attacked Lisbon and later Seville.<sup>60</sup> A very important agent for spreading Spanish influence he sees in the Dominican order, which, on the one hand, kept up communication with the mother country, and on the other, exercised great influence on Swedish cultural and political life.<sup>61</sup> In the field of language and literature, he points out that the Spanish language, perhaps because of the Gothic influence to which it has been subjected, is the easiest of the Romance languages for the Swede to learn. He then notes that the Swedish folk-songs often have their scenes in Spain, and that many of them remind us of Spanish songs.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, he finds a political connection between Sweden and Spain toward the end of the Middle Ages when the marriage of King Christian II, who was for a short time king of Sweden, to Elizabeth, the sister of Emperor Charles V, made the latter ruler a possible heir to the throne of the Scandinavian countries. As a result of this marriage, the Emperor's nephew later claimed the throne of Sweden, and encouraged Dacke in his rebellion against Gustav. Strindberg finds the period of the Thirty Years' War especially notable for Spanish-Swedish relationships.<sup>63</sup>

The other of the two articles referred to is "Franska insatser i svenska kulturen" (1890). Its purpose is to show the close relationship between France and Sweden that has existed thru the years, and particularly the influence that France has had on the development of Swedish culture and civilization.

The first contact between the two countries Strindberg places at the conquest of Blois, Tours, Amboise, etc., by the Northmen. He calls attention, however, to the fact that at the same time France conquered the North spiritually, as exemplified by the

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-74.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-78, 83-90.

work of Anscar and his followers and the building of monasteries which kept up regular correspondence with France.<sup>64</sup>

Discussing the period prior to the sixteenth century, Strindberg points out that the university of Paris was attended by Swedish students, who later returned home and spread French culture; that a great intimacy was established between the two countries by the intermarriage of royal families; etc.<sup>65</sup> In the sixteenth century, he notes political relationships. He also notes the religious influence incident to the Huguenot immigration; and, in general, the spread of French ideas, cultural and industrial, by immigrants. During the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation, Strindberg finds that France influenced Sweden in matters of art, literature, and philosophy.<sup>66</sup> In the seventeenth century, he sees several cases of French influence. France led Sweden out of seclusion into world history in the Thirty Years' War. At the universities, men like Stenius, Bilberg, and Rydelius were spreading the Cartesian philosophy; in literature, the forms of Boileau and Malherbe were copied. The Swedish language in some cases used a great proportion of French loan words; and a French theater which employed only French actors existed.<sup>67</sup> In the eighteenth century, Strindberg contends that Sweden had ceased to be a power in world history and that its foreign policy amounted to nothing but humiliating dependence on France.<sup>68</sup> With the beginning of the nineteenth century, he sees the old connection with France broken, in spite of the fact that a French marshal was chosen for a successor to the Swedish throne. Still, he says, all attempts at separating Sweden from the old "mother country" have been in vain; for even to-day Swedish science, literature, art, and industry get

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-94.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-94.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-103.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-109.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-112.

their supplies from the main store house in Paris because the models found there, being French, are by historic necessity the best.<sup>69</sup> Finally he makes the general assertion that the separation between Swedish and German culture has been going on progressively during a thousand years under Romance influence, and that the Swedish language has been purified thru Roman and French influence from the Gothic remains that make the German so obscure.<sup>70</sup>

After these comparatively detailed essays, we come again to a few brief utterances on the subject of the widely international nature of Swedish relationships. In the *Inferno* (1897), Strindberg notes a reciprocity of spiritual influence between Sweden and France in the fact that France sent Anscar to baptize Sweden and that a thousand years later Sweden sent Swedenborg to baptize France thru his disciple Saint-Martin.<sup>71</sup>

The favorite topic, the composite character of the Swedish race, is again touched on by our author in the novel *Götiska rummen* (1904). Gustav Borg, upon matriculating in a "nation" at the university, learns that his patent of nobility is spurious. The "kurator,"<sup>72</sup> who has made the discovery, consoles him with the fact that most of the noted men of Sweden are of foreign descent.<sup>73</sup> The same subject is again referred to a few pages later, where Henrik Borg is represented as saying that he can see no reason why he should celebrate the memory of Charles XII, since his mother's grandfather was living near the equator at the time of that king.<sup>74</sup>

Another favorite subject with the author, the intellectual dependence of Sweden on foreign countries, is touched upon in

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-114.

<sup>71</sup> *S.S.*, XXVIII, 130.

<sup>72</sup> I.e., the president of the fraternity, known as "nation," which consists of students who come from the same province.

<sup>73</sup> *Götiska rummen*, *S.S.*, XL, 49.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

the same story. Gustav Borg makes himself impossible at the university by airing his radical and revolutionary views; he ceases to attend lectures, but buys text-books instead, thus choosing his teachers himself, most of them foreign, for there were, we are told, no Swedish text-books. Indeed the professors all obtain their material from abroad. The best books are written in German; especially is this the case in the fields of medicine, theology, and esthetics.<sup>75</sup>

#### UNIFYING TENDENCIES IN WORLD HISTORY

We have seen that Strindberg insists that Sweden is an integral part of Europe and has been in many respects profoundly affected by other countries, and that he continually combats the idea that there is very much that is distinctively Swedish.

He applies the same principle to other countries. It will be remembered that in the article "Nationalitet och svenskhet" (1884), already quoted, he tells how his Japanese friend was unable to find anything specifically Swedish in what was shown him. Strindberg continues by saying that the Japanese had had the same experience in other countries. He had already been in England to look for the English, but had found merely an art and architecture that was antique, Gothic, Renascence, or Rococo, etc. He had been in Germany and had found the same thing, and like Strindberg, was uncertain whether the Gothic style was of French, German, or Scandinavian (Norman) origin. The classic came from Rome, but everything Roman came from Greece, and Greece received her culture from Asia and Egypt. The German opera, of which that nation is so proud, goes back to the Italian opera; and in the same way every literary phenomenon finds its roots far back in time, and is made up of atoms gathered from all parts of Europe.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>76</sup> *Likt och olik*, I, S.S., XVI, 159.



This theme is developed more in detail in a review of the history of the different countries, in order to show the transference of political, social, and religious institutions from one country to another. In the beginning of the article "Franska insatser i svenska kulturen" (1890), which was referred to on pp. 45 ff., above, our author gives a brief sketch of the earlier history of France. He calls attention to the fact that in 600 B.C. the Greeks founded Massilia, later called Marseilles, which at one time came to be so saturated with Greek culture that its schools were preferred to those of Athens; as a result, when western civilization left Rome, it settled in Gaul. Clovis accepted the orthodox Athanasian creed—later known as the Catholic—and thus united the Franks with Rome. With Charlemagne and his successors the classical languages and literatures began to be cultivated, while they were forgotten in the homelands, where they lay dormant until the time of the Renaissance.<sup>77</sup>

Likewise, the author, in order to show the foreign relationships of Russia, surveys the history of that country in "Vad är Ryssland?" (1892). He calls attention to the fact that the civilization transmitted from ancient Rome to the Eastern Roman Empire was in turn inherited by Russia thru its Christianization and the exchange of its laws for those of Justinian and Basilus the Macedonian. At the end of the fifteenth century, after the fall of Byzantium, Moscow became the refuge of all the immigrants, who brought with them the treasures of the scientific, artistic, and industrial culture of Hellenic classicism.<sup>78</sup>

In "Världshistoriens mystik," which is an attempt at finding the laws governing historical development, published in 1903,<sup>79</sup> he makes a similar survey of Greece. According to history, he

<sup>77</sup>*Prosabitar från 1890-talet*. S.S., XXVII, 91-93.

<sup>78</sup>*Efterslättar*, S.S., LIV, 316-318.

<sup>79</sup>"Världshistoriens mystik" was probably begun in 1893. Cf. p. 75, footnote 31, below.



says, Hellas took its origin from Phoenicia and Asia Minor, and according to some of its writers received its gods from Egypt. About 350 B.C., it became a Macedonian province, a fact which, according to Strindberg, caused Greek civilization to spread and the Greek language to prevail in the East, so that at the time of Christ the Jews spoke Greek.<sup>80</sup>

Another example is cited in the same article from the history of Rome. Rome begins its history, the author says, at practically the same time with Greece, and the two powers seem to have had the same origin. Nevertheless, Greece seems to get ahead and later exercises an influence on Rome. As early as seven centuries before Christ, Greece had colonies in Tarentum. He finds another influence, partly Greek, in connection with the rule of the first Tarquinian king. He was from Etruria, but his father was a Corinthian; hence Tarquinius Priscus brought with him to Rome both Etruscan and Hellenic civilizations. Later Terentilius Arsa sent three delegates to Athens to study the laws of Solon. Roman civilization may be traced to still other sources, according to Strindberg. From the Sabines the Romans received their Jupiter, their Mars, their lares, and their penates; from the Latins, their Saturn and Janus. But where the seed of Roman civilization came from originally, he does not know, tho it grew among the Etruscans, who themselves seem to have been a complex race.<sup>81</sup>

And this Rome, which had had a culture and civilization so composite, and which had been so noticeably influenced by other civilizations, in turn exerted a very great influence on the civilizations of Europe. Its greatest and most permanent colony was France, where we still find the Roman language, Roman law, Roman official life, and Roman class spirit. Into this country so favored by nature, so we are told, Roman-Hellenic

<sup>80</sup> *Eftersl tter*, S.S., LIV, 380-381.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 389-390.

culture was transplanted and developed here to such a degree that in the seventeenth century the French became the first nation of Europe; and for a while the Cæsar spirit was revived by Napoleon. France, in turn, transplanted the Roman culture and the Roman language into England, which thus has a language half Germanic and half Latin. The effect of the Roman civilization went further than this: it was felt thruout Europe thru two great institutions, church and school, Christianity and learning.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, he notes in the nineteenth century an increased facility for the transference of culture from one country to another in the improved methods of transportation. As a result of this Japan is Europeanized, China opened, Africa colonized, and Europe influenced by Japan in art and in fashions.<sup>83</sup>

Strindberg sees the process of unification in history in the existence of similar synchronous movements in different parts of the world. At the time when Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, he notes important events of similar nature taking place in other countries, both in the physical and the spiritual sphere. As illustrations of the former, he cites, among other things, the legendary Argonautic expedition, the eastward march of the Hindus, and the struggle in China.<sup>84</sup> In the spiritual sphere, he finds that the monotheism involved in the first commandment transmitted by Moses is paralleled in other religions. Furthermore, some authorities put the birth of Buddha at the same time (about 1300 B.C.). In China, Fou Yué was called as prime minister about 1324 B.C., having been found in somewhat the same way as David was found by Saul;

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 392-395. This passage bears within it the Darwinian idea of continued development. This is true of Strindberg's later historical writings in general. In fact, monism is basically an evolutionary conception.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 378, 383.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 337-338.

and he saved the Chinese people just as Moses saved the Israelites. At this time also, according to some, the third of the sacred books, the She-king, a book of songs, was begun. It was a book "which contains everything," and at times rivals the Old Testament in vehemence. Zoroaster also appeared some time between 1700 and 1200 B.C.<sup>85</sup>

Another instance of this existence of similar movements, Strindberg finds at the time of the birth of Christ. He calls attention to the fact that the very year of Christ's birth, Buddhism was brought into China. Furthermore, the Messiah idea itself, he contends, is not exclusively characteristic of the Hebrews. The Zend-Avesta prophesies a Messiah, Sosiosh, and the Vedas proclaim their Krishna, who is born of a virgin in Cali-Youga. He also claims to find the spirit of Christianity in *Vasantasena*, written, he says, in the year of Christ's birth,<sup>86</sup> in the following speeches of the beggar monk. "Tame thy hand, control thy mouth, and thou dost not concern thyself with the glory of the royal power, for thy kingdom is not of this world."<sup>87</sup> The second speech runs: "All earthly is only appearance; collect good works. What kind of folly is this to go with shaven heads! Your mind, your heart, are to be scraped and regenerated. If the mind is pure, then the head is pure also."<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 337-341.

<sup>86</sup> The Dutch Sanskrit scholar J. Ph. Vogel, however, puts the date of *Vasantasena* not earlier than the fifth century after Christ (*Het Leemen Wagentje*, p. X).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 123 (at the end of the first act). Judging from Vogel's rendering, which is recognized as of high scholarly value, Strindberg's translations are very free; particularly the last clause of this quotation seems to be forcibly moulded into a biblical phrase. Vogel's rendering of this clause is, "Die het hiernamaals in de hand heeft, is onwankelbaar."

<sup>88</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 345-347. Cf. *Het Leemen Wagentje*, 102 (at the beginning of the 8th act). In connection with

What should one believe in regard to these coincident circumstances which regularly appear at the time of every great historical event? Is the power of thought so unlimited that it defies time and space and propagates itself and sets congenial souls in similar motion from a distance? Or is the world soul the composite of all souls ("*sammanfattningen av alla själar*"), and is humanity only one single being which perceives it in all of its parts when motion is begun in one? Or does the Conscious World Will stand over it all, governing, putting in order?<sup>89</sup> The latter seems to me the most probable when one sees so well arranged a campaign as the Christianization of Europe, where every movement of every troop seems to be decided in a kind of headquarters and the commanders execute their orders without knowing the purpose of the whole.<sup>90</sup>

Another instance of the working in concert of different powers at different places is afforded, according to our author, by the struggle against the decadence in religion carried on by Mohammed and Gregory the Great at the same time, and the coincident revival of learning in China. In the acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity on the part of the Christian Church, he sees a turn from monotheism to polytheism; there was, he says, a great deal of strife within the church. Mohammed raised the cry of one God and conquered Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia, Babylonia, and Arabia. Gregory, on the other hand, rose against the heathendom of image worship within the church and forbade the reading of heathen authors. In the Orient, Mohammedanism accomplished what Christianity had failed to do; it destroyed idol worship among the Arabians, Persians, and neighboring races. In China there was the revival of religion; the sacred books were again collected under these synchronous movements, Strindberg calls attention to the fact that the idea of vicarious atonement was common to several races ("*Världshistoriens mystik*," S.S., LIV, 341).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. for the same idea "*Världshistoriens mystik*," S.S., LIV, 341, where Strindberg expresses his belief in a will existing outside of us which guides the destinies of nations and of men toward a conscious goal known only to the leader.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

the emperor T'ai-tsung; universities and schools were erected; China transmitted her education and religion to Japan, which accepted Buddha.<sup>91</sup>

In this connection, he quotes with approval the Sinologist M. G. Pauthier on the simultaneous appearance of great men:

Meng-tse was born . . . . . in the fourth century B.C., and was active in China at the same time that Socrates, Xenophon, and Aristotle taught in Greece; just as Lao-tse flourished at the same time as Thales and Pythagoras. This simultaneity in the appearance of great men who are destined to illumine the world, makes one think of the existence of secret bonds of connection, unknown means of intercourse among people belonging to races most distant from each other; or we must assume that all these people are governed by the same intelligence, just as they are lighted by the same sun.<sup>92</sup>

Strindberg sees an expression of unity in history in the recurrence of events or situations, always, to be sure, with some variations.<sup>93</sup> In *Legender* (an autobiographical volume, 1898), he expresses the belief that the Middle Ages, the days of the creeds and confessions, are returning in France. They have been ushered in, he says, by the overthrow of an empire and a miniature Augustus, just as at the decline of the Roman empire and the barbarian invasions. Paris-Rome has been seen in flames, and the Goths have had themselves crowned in the Capitolium-Versailles. The great heathens Taine and Renan have gone down to annihilation, but Jeanne d'Arc has been resurrected again.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 349-353.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 348. Cf. Pauthier, *Chine*, 187.

<sup>93</sup> It is of particular interest to note that this idea of the repetition of history is somewhat the same as the one expressed in connection with the review of *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten* (cf. pp. 17-19, above) with this difference, however, that there it is used as an argument for pessimism and considered a proof of a lack of order in the universe, while here it is fitted into a philosophy and taken as a proof of law and order.

<sup>94</sup> *S.S.*, XXVIII, 346.

The same idea occurs five years later in "Världshistoriens mystik" in the discussion of modern Greece, where Strindberg sees the Sultan of 1897 repeating the rôle of the Persian king; the old battlefields of Pharsalus and Thermopylæ were used again, but without any results. Everything is the same, and yet so different.<sup>95</sup>

In the same manner, he sees in Napoleon a counterpart of Cæsar, and the barbarian against whom this new Cæsar went out was Russia.<sup>96</sup>

As another process of unification he sees in history a movement toward the merging of different countries into one large federation. We have already noted how Strindberg warned his countrymen in 1884 against the harmful patriotism which desires to separate the Scandinavian from the Germanic races and thus prevent the union with the latter which is desirable as a means of protection.<sup>97</sup> To prove the practicability of such a union, he cites Switzerland, which contains people who speak three different languages, and which has served as the place for international enterprises.<sup>98</sup>

As a better illustration of the kind of federation desirable for Europe, Strindberg points to the United States. In *Utopier i verkligheten* (1885) in the story "Samvetskval," one of the characters, Von Bleichroden, suggests that Switzerland is the model from which the Europe of the future will be formed. A Spaniard present doubts whether the plan that works in a country with only three million inhabitants and three languages can successfully be applied to the entire continent of Europe with its numerous and varied races. As a refutation of this objection, a Tyrolese woman submits that she knows a country with

<sup>95</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 382.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 393-394.

<sup>97</sup> S.S., XVI, 144. Cf. p. 40, above.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.



twenty different nationalities from all over the world living together in peace—the United States of America.<sup>99</sup>

The idea of a federation of European states is found again in *Författaren* (1880) in the chapter "Tjänstekvinnans son," where Strindberg reports a conversation which took place in the same year, 1886, between himself and a friend. In discussing the political and economic situation, Strindberg says that everything develops naturally into association, that there will be at some time, "tho not to-morrow," a United States of Europe, and that there will be at some future date a single small defensive European army against the Asiatics.<sup>100</sup>

The idea of smaller states merging into one larger federation is touched on again in "Världshistoriens mystik" (1903). Making a broad survey of universal history, Strindberg found throughout the history of the world a tendency on the part of the larger states to absorb the smaller ones, and a tendency toward universal monarchy.<sup>101</sup> He mentions as an example of this the kingdom of Genghis Khan (Jenghis Khan), which extended from China to Poland and from India to Siberia.<sup>102</sup> Another example is the kingdom of the Great Mogul in India, which was founded by Bâber, a descendant of Genghis Khan.<sup>103</sup>

As a plan which was never carried out but deserves mention for its grandeur, Strindberg mentions that of Henry IV of France. All the countries of Europe, divided into fifteen equal powers, were to form an alliance which was to represent on a basis of equality the three Christian faiths: the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed;—and three forms of government,—elective and hereditary monarchy, and republic.<sup>104</sup> This idea, he says, was partially adopted by Richelieu, who entered into an alliance with England and Holland in spite of their

<sup>99</sup> *Utopier i verkligheten*, S.S., XV, 220.

<sup>100</sup> S.S., XIX, 295-296.

<sup>101</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 396.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 367-368.

Protestantism, and fought against the Pope in spite of his Catholicism.<sup>105</sup>

He also speaks of the rise of Prussia, which became the germ of a northern Teutonic kingdom counteracting Romanized South Germany. Prussia was made up, he notes, of pieces of Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Austria. It later became Germany; and Berlin became, not the capital of Prussia or Brandenburg, nor even of all Germany, but one of the capitals of Europe, where all cultures and races mix.<sup>106</sup>

In this connection, it may be well also to notice Strindberg's reference to The Hague Peace Congress, another step in bringing the different nations closer together.<sup>107</sup>

Another process of unification in history is seen in the mixture of races. In the article "Vad är Ryssland?" (1892), he calls attention to the fact that the Russian people was first made up of a great number of races which had been united into a state under the power of the grand dukes, who were scattered over the plains of Sarmatia; even before the Christian era Greek and Roman colonies had settled on the northern shores of the Black Sea, and the Scythians kept up commercial intercourse with these.<sup>108</sup>

In speaking of the effect of the migrations in "Världshistoriens mystik," he calls attention to the fact that one result of these was the crossing of races, so that, for instance, "after 800 years of crossing with Teutonic blood, one can no longer speak of Romans and Greeks, except as historical conceptions."<sup>109</sup> Likewise, in the discovery of America, he sees the one object: to bring together and mix people from all nations, to tolerate in one state all religions and languages, all manners

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 378. Cf. also p. 61, below.

<sup>108</sup> *Efterslättter*, S.S., LIV, 316.

<sup>109</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 347-348.

and customs.<sup>110</sup> He cites as other instances of race mixture the composite character of the Spanish race at the time when the stage of European history had been transferred from Greece and Italy to Spain;<sup>111</sup> the complexity of the Greek race, which is a mixture of Slavs, Turks, Albanians, Italians, and others;<sup>112</sup> and that of the French, to whose composite character he attributes their ability to retain their integrity after the fall of Napoleon.<sup>113</sup>

Strindberg is also interested in this mixture of races as seen in the ruling houses. He finds examples of this in the history of Russia. Vladimir, the founder of the Russian Empire, married a daughter of Romanov II, the Emperor of Constantinople. The members of Jaroslav's family married into some of the most powerful royal houses in Europe; his daughter Anna, for instance, was married to Henry I of France. Ivan III married a Byzantine princess, Sophia Palæologa.<sup>114</sup> Another instance of this race mixture among rulers is furnished by Roman history. This he finds uninteresting down to the time of Cæsar and Augustus, when "it becomes a novel" and when the emperors are world citizens. Claudius was born in Lyons; Pertinax, in Liguria; Septimius Severus was an African; Macrinus, a Numidian; etc. When we come to the question of the Illyrian emperors, we have a hopeless task; for Illyria was originally populated by relatives of the Thracians, who in time mixed with the Phœnicians, Hellenes, Italians, and Celts.<sup>115</sup> In the eighteenth century, he finds that there had been so much intermarriage among the royal families of Europe that the courts were all related, a fact which explains many of the

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 360-361.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 394.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 316-318.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

wars of succession.<sup>116</sup> The result of this mixture of races was that the states of Europe had become abstract conceptions; they were collections of people of different religions, languages, customs, and traditions.<sup>117</sup> "Nationalities were dissolved; the citizens had become world citizens, like the princes, since the states had become mere conceptions, wavering, changing, vanishing."<sup>118</sup>

Furthermore, under the process of unification in history, Strindberg notes a unification of religious beliefs.<sup>119</sup> As examples of this, he cites the fact that Reccared I forced the Goths and the Romans together and thus made Catholics out of the Arian Goths,<sup>120</sup> that Mohammed was a Syncretist and a Unitarian, who in the Koran gave a compromise of Judaism, Christianity, and Eastern monotheism, a fact which according to Strindberg explains his political success;<sup>121</sup> and that one of the results of the Treaty of Westphalia was the recognition of the Jews as semi-Christians which logically had to follow the acceptance of the Old Testament as a canonical book.<sup>122</sup> With this tolerance came later indifference and doubt; people saw that one religion developed just as good citizens as another, and hence came to the conclusion that religious truth is subjective. This was the end of the religious wars.<sup>123</sup> When Strindberg reads about the churches closing in France at the beginning of the century, he sees in that a striving to make the education of the citizens homogeneous, parallel to the closing of the convents and the confiscation of church property during the Reformation. The times do not allow, he says, isolation and separa-

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 373-374.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>119</sup> This brief discussion does not include the material written by Strindberg on the essential unity of all religions.

<sup>120</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 351.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

tion.<sup>124</sup> Finally he notes in the nineteenth century religious congresses, where all confessions gathered in harmony to discuss "insoluble problems."<sup>125</sup>

#### DISINTEGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN HISTORY

Strindberg's monistic conception of history can be expressed in one formula,—the reduction of all historic movement to disintegration and integration. In *Likt och olik* I, in the article "Nationalitet och svenskhet" (1884), he says that the national striving of Europe is twofold: first, there is an apparent separation (disintegration), and, at the end of this, a general uniting into associations based on free agreements (integration).<sup>126</sup> Later in the same article he speaks about the Scandinavian nationalism which constituted a part of the general nationalistic tendency in Europe. "Scandinavianism springs up, but obscure, impractical, and with tendencies to restricted separation" (disintegration). . . . "The movement dies as far as it is concerned with external policies, but is resurrected in our days as a beginning of a common democratic revival, and brings with it the question of neutralization, international courts, and farthest in the background, a general confederation of free states" (integration).<sup>127</sup>

The idea is again expressed in the discussion of Luther in "Världshistoriens mystik" (1903). Just as the entire act of analysis in chemistry can be reduced to two main processes, solution and precipitation, so, Strindberg says, there seem to be two processes going on in the forward march of the different races, namely disintegration and integration. The work of disintegration is no doubt the harder and the one receiving the less credit, but at the same time, the more effective one. The chemist knows, he says, continuing the figure, how difficult it is to

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 383-384.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>126</sup> *S.S.*, XVI, 148-149.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-166.

obtain a clear solution, while precipitation often takes place of its own accord.<sup>128</sup> In applying this general proposition to the German reformer, he says, "Luther was a man of disintegration, who began with denial and ended with assertions. . . ." <sup>129</sup>

The idea of integration as one of the chief results of historic development is definitely expressed in chapter X ("Sammanfattning") of "Världshistoriens mystik" (1903). The different countries in the world, our author says, have come in close contact with each other; the nations have joined together in great common interests; their customs have become more and more alike; in a word, everywhere can be seen a striving after homogeneity, uniformity. "From the heterogeneous to the homogeneous," Strindberg misquotes Spencer as indicating the path of development.<sup>130</sup>

But development, our author continues, can come only thru reciprocal action of antagonistic forces; this is the reason why

<sup>128</sup> For Strindberg's emphasis on doubt and negation, cf. above, p. 5, footnote 14, also p. 16. We should not overlook the fact that altho he at times stresses the process of disintegration as particularly difficult and also useful, he sometimes represents it as an evil. In "Armageddon," he cites the great number of religions, philosophies, and languages that exist on earth to show that it is an evil place (*Efterslättar*, S.S., LIV, 155). As we have seen, he considers the purpose of historical progress to be unification. He emphasizes disintegration, not as something desirable in itself, but as a means leading to a more perfect integration.

<sup>129</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 363. Strindberg defends Protestantism against the charge of being negative (*ibid.*, 385).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 395-396. Spencer's definition is as follows: "Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation" (*First Principles*, 396). Strindberg quotes Spencer correctly as giving evolution the definition of "movement from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous" in *Bland franska bönder* (S.S., XX, 215), also in the autobiographical volume *I röda rummet*, where Spencer is referred to as "an English philosopher" (S.S., XIX, 85). Cf. also S.S., XXII, 266, where the definition above is given correctly, but without mention of Spencer.



all efforts of man to produce homogeneity have failed. The spirit of history seems to have hated the universal monarchies and universal religions of mortals, and still this seems to be the very goal of progress. The goal, then, was the right one, he concludes, but man did not understand the means.<sup>131</sup> All of Europe, with the exception of Russia, once constituted a Christian community, under one head, the Pope. Why, then, did that division have to take place which was brought in thru the Protestant churches? The Papal power was a splendid counter-balance against the imperial power, and so had its justification; and yet it disappeared from the history of Northern Germany. Charles V planned a world monarchy for all of Europe; Henry IV, likewise; Napoleon had almost realized this idea; but each time the work that was begun was dissolved. The one integrates; the other disintegrates, and vice versa; but with every process something new is added. This process, Strindberg says, again recurring to the analogy with chemistry, reminds one somewhat of chemical analysis, where one makes a precipitate in a solution and then solves the precipitate in order to precipitate again.<sup>132</sup>

Of interest in connection with the foregoing phase of Strindberg's monistic doctrine is his ability to discern contradictions in history and other fields, and his constant endeavor to resolve them. Thruout his life, his endeavor, conscious or unconscious, was to discover an "infinite harmony" in the "great disorder," to use his own expression in the introduction to "Jardin des Plantes."<sup>133</sup> An example of this is found in "Världshistoriens mystik," in the discussion of the war which began in 1546 and which was at first called the Schmalkald War. This soon proved to be a political war, since Maurice of Saxony formed an alliance with the Catholic Henry II of France, who was the hus-

<sup>131</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 396.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>133</sup> S.S., XXVII, 208.

band of Catherine of Medici and who persecuted the Huguenots. At the end of the wars, a hundred years later, the confusion was so great that it was impossible to separate friend from foe. In the same way, he adds, the Peace of Westphalia was brought about by Catholic France helping the German Protestants. Gustav Adolf had to use French money and form an alliance with Richelieu. These paradoxical combinations,—Maurice of Saxony-Catherine of Medici and Gustav Adolf-Richelieu,—belong to the eternally recurring antinomies of history, which at last resolve themselves into perfect logic. As an explanation of this, he offers the suggestion that men perhaps in their limitations assume false opposites, like Catholic and Protestant, which are not purely contrary altho apparently contradictory. Perhaps, he adds, the forces of history work like the laws of human thought, thru thesis and antithesis forward to synthesis, which is creation.<sup>134</sup> Later in the same work, he sees one of these antinomies in the fact that England is free under an Hanoverian; Denmark, under a German; and Sweden, under a Frenchman. The rulers are cosmopolitans, and the people, patriots.<sup>135</sup>

#### THE COURSE OF HISTORY INTERPRETED AS A PART OF NATURE'S ORDER

We have seen the different applications of Strindberg's monistic doctrines to the field of history. We should note, also, that he gropes after a higher monism in his search for parallelisms between history and other fields. It has been the opinion for some time, he says, that the progress of history is ruled by certain laws similar to those that rule in the world of nature.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>134</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 365-366.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>136</sup> We find something of this idea in Buckle (cf. p. 4, above). It should be remembered that Strindberg does not offer any definite and complete system of monistic philosophy, nor does he show exactly how

In history there have been noticed traces of the physical law of equilibrium (the European balance of power), the law of attraction (the tendency of the larger states to absorb the smaller ones), affinity ("valirändskap"), substitution, etc. From the organic field, on the other hand, such conceptions have been borrowed as cell splitting, segmentation ("segmentering"), struggle, etc.<sup>137</sup>

In particular, we should note that there is in Strindberg's conception of all historic movement as disintegration and integration a parallel to his theory that in language all words go back originally to the meanings "separate" and "gather" ("söndra" and "samla") and that in chemistry every process is solution and precipitation. This is again reduced from what might appear a kind of dualism (I am using the word here in a sense somewhat different from its philosophic significance) to a true monism by the doctrine that "Everything contains Yes and No," and "Everything consists of its opposite," attributed to Jacob Boehme, or "Everything is born of its opposite," attributed to Plato and Hegel.<sup>138</sup> This is also similar to the idea of one kind of electricity with two different poles, and the suggestion that hydrogen and oxygen may be two expressions of the same power inherent in all substances.<sup>139</sup>

### SUMMARY

Strindberg's monistic interpretation of history is only one phase of the general tendency of his philosophic thinking. Nevertheless, his earliest monistic ideas are practically re-

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history is an integral part of such a system. All that we can assert is that he has a strong conviction that there is essential unity in creation and that history is a part of this unity and that occasionally he offers what seem to him illustrative examples.

<sup>137</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 398.

<sup>138</sup> *Svarta fanor*, S.S., XLI, 125, and *Öppna brev.*, S.S., I, 217.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. p. 32, footnote 7, above.

stricted to the field of history. The first step in his monistic conception of history is found in that interpretation, expressed in 1881 in *Svenska folket*, which considers the individual the product rather than the maker of his times.

The next step is his conception of Sweden as an integral part of Europe. The idea of Sweden's dependence on other countries is expressed as an historical fact in 1881 in the preface to *Svenska folket*, but as an admission made with some reluctance. It is stated as a normal and natural fact in 1884 in the article "Nationalitet och svenskhet," where it is seen as a part of a general proposition, i.e., the interdependence of different countries on one another. In this and his later works, Strindberg establishes in several ways the theory that Sweden is an integral part of Europe. He points out that the Swedish race is first of all an Asiatic race, which indeed proves more than is required; secondly, that the Goths who settled in southern and middle Scandinavia were related to the Visigoths of Spain; thirdly, that thru later foreign infiltrations, the Swedish race has become related to other races of Europe. He shows that in her education, religion, philosophy, music, art, architecture, etc., Sweden has been profoundly influenced by other nations and has in turn influenced these. He shows that Sweden has played important rôles in world history, particularly during the Thirty Years' War, and that she has been intimately related politically to some of the other countries of Europe. He stresses especially Sweden's continued dependence on France and her intimate connection with that country. He also makes a point of Sweden's union with Rome in Pre-Reformation times, and, thru the Papal See, indirectly with the other European countries in general.

The idea of the interdependence of different countries on one another is applied to France in 1890, and to Russia in 1892. The idea of combinations of individual states into larger units emerges in 1884, when an alliance between the Scandinavian and

the other Germanic races is pointed out as desirable; in 1885, the confederation of all the European states is seen as a utopian ideal. The idea of disintegration and integration in history comes forward in 1884.

Strindberg's more conscious monistic speculation in history probably begins in 1893, altho none of it is published until ten years later. However, his general interest during this period in a unitary interpretation of existence is attested by his studies in various other fields. From 1893 on, his writings are filled with monistic doctrines, which he develops into a fairly well organized system covering a large range of subjects. In chemistry, he opposes the theory of the many simple elements and insists on the existence of only one. He becomes interested in the transmutation of metals. In other fields, he wishes to do away with all lines of demarcation, such as those between matter and mind, between the animal and the vegetable kingdom, between organic and inorganic nature, between different classes of languages, between physical and psychic laws. He suggests the possible transmutation of plants and contends that all languages are essentially one. He arrives, partly under the influence of St. Pierre and Swedenborg, at the conclusion that things in general are essentially alike, and that, therefore, similarities and parallelisms may be seen everywhere, even in things considered the most remote from each other.

Most of the scientific and philosophical ideas referred to above antedate the publication in 1903 of "*Världshistoriens mystik*." The impersonal interpretation of history, altho not formally announced as a doctrine, underlies this work. It does not contain the theory of Sweden as an integral part of Europe, but it does stress the larger proposition of which this is a part,—the interdependence of different countries on one another. It reiterates the other historical theories advanced in earlier works, including the doctrine of the recurrence of historical

events, which is found in 1898 in *Legender*. It also sets forth four new important historical principles. It offers all of these ideas as generalized theories illustrated by abundant examples and fitted into a carefully thought-out system.

Strindberg's monistic theory of history includes the following ideas, the last four of which appear for the first time in "Världshistoriens mystik":

The impersonal interpretation of history.

The interdependence of different countries on one another.

A movement of unification going on in the transference of political, social, and religious institutions from one country to another.

Movements toward larger empires and monarchies, and in modern times toward larger democratic federations.

A process of unification in the mixture of races taking place among different peoples.

The recurrence of historical events.

The reduction of all historic activity to disintegration and integration.

Similar physical and spiritual movements taking place in different parts of the world at the same time. The conception of these synchronous movements as proceeding from a conscious world will.

A unification of religious beliefs.

A movement towards unity in the resolution of apparent contradictions.

The inclusion of historic activity within the world process as a whole and the subjection of history to laws similar to those prevailing in other fields.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE IDEA OF A CONSCIOUS WILL IN HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

This chapter treats the development of the idea of a divine plan in Strindberg's historical thinking. It includes a brief review of his personal religious development<sup>2</sup> in so far as this seems desirable for a better understanding of his historical theory. The religious development has been treated chronologically; the historical theories, topically, with each topic treated chronologically within itself.

In Chapter I we noted the development of a pessimistic attitude toward life, which by 1885 had grown into a kind of provisional atheism.<sup>3</sup> This attitude was certainly with Strindberg as late as 1890, when he wrote *I havsbandet*. There is in this work a passage which is of interest for two reasons. First, it shows Strindberg's sceptical attitude toward religion; secondly, it gave him a reputation for having Catholic leanings. It expresses the sentiment of the fisher superintendent, who in general reflects the mode of thought of the author.

He remembered when Sweden belonged to the great general Christian Church that she was in direct connection with Rome and that she thereby was held in esteem by Europe. With this in mind, he wished, if it should become evident that religion could not be abandoned by the masses,

<sup>1</sup> As a basis for this chapter the following works have been used: *Likt och olikt*, II; *I havsbandet*; *Himmelrikets nycklar*; *Inferno*; *Legender*; *Prosabitar från 1890-talet*; *Fagervik och Skamsund*; *En blå bok*, I & II; *Öppna brev till Intima Teatern*; *Svarta fanor*; *Tal till svenska nationen samt andra tidningsartiklar 1910-1912*; *Efterslätter* (including "Brev till Gauguin," "Vad är Ryssland?" "Världshistoriens mystik").

<sup>2</sup> This review is based largely on the autobiographical sketches.

<sup>3</sup> This atheism by degrees became dogmatic.

to re-introduce the Catholic faith, this faith of our fathers which we were forced by fire and sword to abjure.<sup>4</sup>

The superintendent then goes on to speak of the conquests of victorious Catholicism, while he characterizes the Lutheran faith as sectarianism and a return to barbarism. The words, "if it should become evident that religion could not be abandoned by the masses," show that the superintendent considers religion justified only as a concession to inferior intellects, not as anything having a legitimate reason for existing *per se*.

Martin Lamm surmises that a certain passage in the play *Himmelrikets nycklar* (1892) was intended to correct the impression of a favorable attitude toward Catholicism created by the above passage. Standing in St. Peter's in Rome, the apostle for whom that cathedral was named says in melancholy accents that he never was further away from heaven than there.<sup>5</sup> However, Lamm also sees in this play a certain weariness of the dogmatic atheism which Strindberg had been proclaiming. The dramatist has his blacksmith say that no one suffers more than he who believes in nothing, and yet, he is farthest from the cross.<sup>6</sup>

This weariness of dogmatic atheism and the gradual departure from his old unbelief must have been strengthened somewhat by August 1894. In the second story in "Karantänmästarns berättelser" (1898), Strindberg relates in the guise of fiction the story of his marriage with Frieda Uhl.<sup>7</sup> From this we gather the following facts concerning his and his wife's visit at the home of her parents at the time referred to above. He was undergoing bitter mental suffering. The

<sup>4</sup> *I havsbandet*, S.S., XXIV, 225-226. Another example of this same attitude is found in the article on Voltaire written in 1890 (*Likt och olikt*, II, S.S., XVII, 265). Cf. also p. 74, below.

<sup>5</sup> *Romantiska dramer*, II, 382.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 383. Cf. also Lamm, *Strindbergs dramer*, I, 385.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. S.S., XXXVII, "Anmärkningar," 353.

circumstances connected with this were such that Strindberg felt forced to assume the existence of an invisible hand which was interfering in his fate. The things that happened, he felt, could not be referred to natural causes. Without any definite faith, he entered upon a kind of religious crisis.<sup>8</sup> He longed to get away. There had been discussions in Berlin about the founding of creedless monasteries. These were to serve as places of refuge for those who could no longer feel at home in the atmosphere of materialism which they themselves had helped to create. Strindberg now felt a longing for such a monastery. What he wanted above all was a place where, protected against the temptations of the world, he might forget and be forgotten. Under the influence of this desire, he wrote to a wealthy friend in Paris and proposed the founding of a monastery, which was to have for its purpose the training of supermen thru asceticism and meditation. Its intellectual activity was to embrace science, literature, and art. Religion was not mentioned; for it was not known what religion was to come, or even whether there was to be any religion in the future.<sup>9</sup>

This is significant as indicating a belief or the beginning of a belief in an invisible power; an indefinite religious longing; and a conscious reaction against materialism. After the following Christmas, 1894,<sup>10</sup> we find in Strindberg something approaching a definite personal faith. His experiences at this time are related in the *Inferno* (1897). His wife and child left him, supposedly for an indefinite period, but Strindberg felt that it was to be forever. He fell ill. A woman whom he despised on account of her irregular habits learned of his ill-

<sup>8</sup> . . . . . "föll han i ett slags religiös kris."

<sup>9</sup> *Fagervik och Skamsund, S.S.*, XXXVII, 207-208.

<sup>10</sup> It was in 1894, according to Strindberg's own statement, that he began experimentally to assume the position of a believer. *Legender, S.S.*, XXVIII, 399.

ness and financial condition. She took up a collection for him among the Swedes of Paris and thus enabled him to go to the hospital. This made a deep impression on him. Again he began to suspect the existence of an invisible hand, he says, "which guides the irresistible logic of events."<sup>11</sup>

This feeling was strengthened from time to time. While in the hospital, where he stayed until some time in February, he saw a proof of Providential interference in the influence of his nurse. This woman he characterizes as a model of self-renunciation and kindness and credits her with teaching him the way of the cross without any preaching.<sup>12</sup> On his birthday (Jan. 22, 1895), he received a letter from his wife. He felt the need of thanking some one, but whom? "The Invisible One, who for so many years had remained hidden?"<sup>13</sup>

However, the course of Strindberg's life at this time did not continue to run smooth. He was subjected to disagreeable and torturing experiences. One of these, he tells us, was the attitude of jealousy that his wife manifested when she learned of the success of some of his chemical experiments. His trials convinced him that Providence intended him for a mission in the world and was training him for this mission.<sup>14</sup> The "Unknown One" by degrees became a personal acquaintance, one to whom he spoke and gave thanks and with whom he consulted. At times he thought of Him as a counterpart of the "daimon" of Socrates. The consciousness that he was aided by unknown powers gave him, he declares, an energy and a confidence hitherto unknown, and impelled him to efforts of which he had formerly been incapable.<sup>15</sup> At this time he saw in everything a Providential purpose or a sign; a rainbow over his initials A. S.

<sup>11</sup> *S.S.*, XXVIII, 12-13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 20.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

on a shop window gave him courage to go to the laboratory at the Sorbonne to perform some of his chemical experiments.<sup>18</sup>

Characteristic of his religious attitude at this time are the circumstances attendant upon his first visit to the great Paris university. When he arrived at the chapel, he found the door open and he entered, not knowing why. The holy mother and the child greeted him with a smile. The crucified one, however, incomprehensible as always, he says, made no impression upon him.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, he felt that St. Louis, the king under whose reign the Sorbonne had been founded, was his guardian angel, who had guided his steps to the university. "It is strange," he says, "how from atheism I have fallen into the most extreme forms of superstition."<sup>18</sup>

The summer and fall of 1895 Strindberg characterizes, as he looks back upon them two years later, as one of the few happy periods of his life.<sup>19</sup> A kind of religion, he says, had grown up within him, altho he was unable to express it in formulas. It was, as he terms it, a condition of the soul rather than a doctrine based on theories. He read with enjoyment an old Roman Catholic prayer book. The Old Testament consoled him, and chastened him in a somewhat obscure manner, while the New Testament left him unmoved. A Buddhist book made a stronger impression on him than all the other sacred books because it placed positive suffering higher than continence. Buddha, he says, shows the courage of turning away from wife and chil-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that Strindberg's acceptance of a personal God comes before his acceptance of Christ. As late as February, 1895, he wrote to Gauguin, "I hate Christ and the crown of thorns. Sir, I hate them, do you hear? I don't want this pitiable God who accepts a beating, I would rather then have for my God Vitsliputsl, who eats the hearts of men in the sunshine" (*Efterslätter*, S.S., LIV, 328).

<sup>18</sup> S.S., XXVIII, 25.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

dren when one is in his best years and is enjoying marital happiness, while Christ, on the other hand, avoids every share in the permissible joys of life.<sup>20</sup> Strindberg's attitude toward prevailing scientific theories at this time deserves mention. Brunetière's proclamation of the bankruptcy of science<sup>21</sup> struck a responsive chord in his heart. Having been familiar with the natural sciences since childhood, and at one time a follower of Darwin, he had discovered, he says, the unsatisfactory character of this scientific method, which recognized the excellent mechanism of the universe without admitting the existence of the mechanician.<sup>22</sup>

The details of his sufferings and imagined persecutions at this time form an interesting chapter in the story of his religious development. The book of Job convinced him that God had left him in the power of Satan to be tempted.<sup>23</sup> The reading of Balzac's *Séraphita* introduced him to Swedenborg, with whose ideas he became more and more familiar. Particularly did he become interested in the Swedish mystic during his visit to his wife's relatives in Austria, which began Sept. 1, 1896. His wife's mother and aunt had undergone torturing experiences similar to his own, and had found peace thru Swedenborg.<sup>24</sup>

One event during this visit is significant as indicating Strindberg's conception of a personal God and his relations with the theosophists. He became acquainted with a member of this sect as early as 1890 and corresponded with him at times. He found himself unable, he says, to agree with him on two points. One was the killing of self which the theosophists preached; the other was the doctrine of "Karma," i.e., the abstract of

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Från Röda rummet till sekelskiftet*, II, 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Inferno*, S.S., XXVIII, 34.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 125, 131-132.



human fortunes, which in the case of each individual makes the good and evil of life strike an even balance and thus constitutes a kind of Nemesis. To Strindberg, the Powers ("makterna") had shown themselves as one or more concrete, living, individual personalities who rule the world and the lives of men consciously and hypostatically.<sup>25</sup> During this visit, he received from this theosophic friend a copy of Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. Strindberg then wrote a letter to his friend in which he said that he found himself unable to associate with a group that denied a personal God, the only one that could satisfy his religious cravings.<sup>26</sup>

Strindberg's visit to his wife's relatives in Austria rendered him somewhat sympathetic towards the Catholic Church.<sup>27</sup> His daughter was a Catholic, and thru constant associations with Catholics, he learned to see many beautiful things in their faith. This leaning toward Catholicism was strengthened after his return to Sweden when he read in Swedenborg's *Arcana Cœlestia* that it was wrong to leave the faith of one's fathers. He felt also that Catholicism was making great progress in America, England, and Scandinavia. This he took as a prophetic sign of an early return of the apostate churches, including the Greek Church, to Rome. Protestantism, he felt, was a reversion to barbarism.<sup>28</sup>

Strindberg retained this sympathy toward the Catholic Church until his death. He was, he tells us, at one time on the point of joining it. On his visit to Paris, beginning June 25, 1897, he attended mass at Notre-Dame on Sunday and decided that the "Mother Church" was the place to find salvation. This decision was changed, however, the following day, when he

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160.

<sup>27</sup> For earlier expressions of sympathy with the Catholic Church on its historical side cf. pp. 68-69, above.

<sup>28</sup> *Inferno*, S.S., XXVIII, 199-202.

read in *La Presse*, that the abbot of the monastery of Solesmes had been dismissed on a charge of immorality.<sup>29</sup>

Strindberg's conversion to Christianity he himself dates at 1896. His religion from that time on he characterizes in a newspaper article (1910) as a kind of creedless Christianity, not in line with the pietists, but rather somewhat like that of Swedenborg.<sup>30</sup>

Now let us turn from Strindberg's personal conception of God and his religious leanings to his historical theory as influenced by the idea of a divine plan. The first expression in a critical work of a belief in Providence as an active factor in history is found in "Världshistoriens mystik" (1903).<sup>31</sup> We have already seen in Chapter II that of the two theories offered

<sup>29</sup> *Legender*, S.S., XXVIII, 319-320. *Legender* may be considered a continuation of *Inferno*.

<sup>30</sup> *Tal till svenska nationen*, S.S., LIII, 18.

<sup>31</sup> The development of this idea has been shown from his confession in the *Inferno*, pp. 70-71, above. That it was in Strindberg's mind long before its formulation in theory is attested by its occurrence in his creative works prior to this date (cf. Chapter VIII). It should also be noted that Strindberg probably worked on "Världshistoriens mystik" as early as November 1893. In the second one of "Karantänmästarns berättelser," already referred to (cf. p. 69, above), he says that in his despair he sat down and wrote from his notes a résumé of the most important epochs in world history. He hoped to be able, he says, to enter upon a new field, that of history, which in fact had been that of his youth before he had become engaged in the pursuit of belles lettres (*Fagervik och Skamsund*, S.S., XXXVII, 194). It is probably to these studies that he refers later in the same work when he says that he sent for his books and began a series of investigations in the course of which he found his earlier hypotheses and conclusions verified by synthesis and analysis (*ibid.*, 197). In August 1894, his historical studies, he says, had received encouraging expressions of approval from two great authorities, one a German and the other a Frenchman (*ibid.*, 208). Of course, it is by no means certain that the idea of a Conscious Will was present with him as early as this.

by thinkers to explain parallel movements in history, he favors the one assuming the existence of a will standing above and guiding the destinies of men and nations toward a conscious goal known only to the leader. We have seen also how he finds this belief corroborated by the entrance of Christianity into occidental civilization and the resemblance of this to a military expedition consciously planned.<sup>32</sup>

In reviewing the activities of Mohammed and Gregory the Great, Strindberg calls attention to the fact that the "Conscious Will" set the goal for each. Italy, Gaul, Britain, and Germany, he says, were protected against the attacks of Mohammed. Spain was given to him, but not until a hundred years later. However, the preparation was made in the time of Mohammed: for the Visigoth Leovigild at that time destroyed the power of the Suevi in Galicia; Reccared I united the Goths and the Romans; and the Arian Goths became Catholics. This all gives the impression, the author argues, of a statesman planning political events a century ahead of time.<sup>33</sup>

The idea of a superior intellect deliberately and calmly planning future events recurs somewhat further on in the same discussion. After reviewing the preparation for Islam in Greece, the influence of Mohammedanism in ending idol worship among certain peoples, the advent of the Turks, the revival of religion in China, and the introduction of Chinese civilization into Japan, Strindberg concludes that the whole thing is like a game of chess played on a colossal scale by a single player, who moves both sides, figures everything out ahead of time, etc.<sup>34</sup> In the treatment of Byzantium he sees another example of the will of God. In this city, Christianity had degenerated into theology, and all sins flourished; but "the Lord wished to spare

<sup>32</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 341, 347. Cf. also p. 53, above.

<sup>33</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 351.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 352-353.

this Sodom until Rome had reached the age of maturity," hence it was not captured until 1453.<sup>35</sup>

In the fact that civilization has always been restricted to the northern hemisphere, Strindberg sees a divine purpose, without, however, pretending to understand the reason therefor. He connects it with Zech. VI, 7-8: "And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro thru the earth. . . . So they walked to and fro thru the earth. Then cried he upon me and spake unto me, saying, 'Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.'"<sup>36</sup> He also calls attention to the fact that no prophets, heroes, or lawmakers have ever been born in the southern hemisphere<sup>37</sup>

In this divine plan as seen in world history lies a guarantee for an optimistic view of life. The study of past times should inspire us with a certain confidence in the future, when we see how in spite of everything events move on toward a certain goal.<sup>38</sup>

The idea of Providence in history is expressed incidentally in connection with the discussion of *Julius Cæsar* found in *Öppna brev till Intima Teatern* (1908-1909). Speaking of Shakspeare's impartiality in meting out justice in the play, Strindberg says: "History in its larger outlines is the composition of Providence itself, and Shakspeare is a providentialist like the tragedians of antiquity; for that reason he does not neglect the historical but lets the highest justice be done even to the point of pettiness."<sup>39</sup> The discovery of this divine plan

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358.

<sup>36</sup> The Swedish version differs somewhat from the King James version. Thus, "De starka," "the strong" (scil. "horses") instead of "the bay," and "skola sänka min anda," instead of "have quieted my spirit."

<sup>37</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," *S.S.*, LIV, 361.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>39</sup> *Öppna brev till Intima Teatern*, *S.S.*, L, 114.

in history should, according to views which Strindberg expresses later, be the purpose of historical study. In *En blå bok*, II (1908), he says that pragmatic history, i.e., history seeking to establish the relation of cause and effect, is of necessity subjective and unreliable: the results of each person's investigation can be foretold with accuracy. He complains of the fact that while there have been books on God in nature, there have been perhaps only two written on "God in History," those by Herder and Johannes von Müller. Otherwise, he says, all history is godless and therefore worthless.<sup>40</sup>

Strindberg's theorizing does not stop with a general belief in a divine will guiding historic events; he is interested in the methods by which this divine will operates. He sees it executing its plans thru the agency of men, tho the men carrying out these plans are themselves ignorant of them, in fact, frequently trying to accomplish entirely different purposes of their own.<sup>41</sup> He believes that the souls of men are influenced from without; that they are created to be the tools of an external will, which guides them to a goal fully known only to the leader.<sup>42</sup> The Christianization of Europe was a campaign in which the movement of every troop was decided in advance in a headquarters, and carried out by commanders ignorant of the final purpose toward which they were working. As examples of individuals thus unconsciously carrying out the purposes of God, Strindberg cites Cæsar, the heathen, who thought that he was Romanizing northern Europe, when in reality he was baptizing it for Christ;<sup>43</sup> Columbus, who set out to find the East Indies, like one "sent out with sealed orders in the service of the Conscious

<sup>40</sup> S.S., XLVII, 547-548.

<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to note that this very idea is found in Hartmann, with the exception that instead of the Conscious Will guiding the events in history, Hartmann has the "Unconscious" (*Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 333). Cf. Möhlig, *Strindbergs Weltanschauung*, 90.

<sup>42</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 341.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.



Will";<sup>44</sup> Luther, who wished to reform the creed and to found a new religion, while in reality he overthrew the spiritual and temporal power of Rome and founded a new state.<sup>45</sup> Catherine II did not know what she was doing when she financed the Encyclopedia, nor Gustav III when he eulogized the freedom of the press; Louis XVI was blind when he aided the Colonies in the American Revolution.<sup>46</sup> Applying this principle to groups, Strindberg notes the great migrating hordes who went from the East to the West thinking that they were conquering lands and collecting treasures when, in reality, they were destroying the rotten civilizations of Rome and Greece; like the Huns, who did not know of the race from which they were descended, nor, with the exception of Attila, of their office as the scourge of God.<sup>47</sup> In a general way our author suggests that those who, in our days, leave home and relatives to go to the colonies without knowing why are probably driven by an unconscious feeling that they have certain missions to perform, missions relating to their own lives or to the lives of others.<sup>48</sup>

This principle is expressed in a general way at the end of "Världshistoriens mystik." In the world's history, he says, mortals have acted unconsciously and without knowledge of the goal; but a Conscious Will made use of all the antagonistic forces, the high flight of spirit and the earthbound nature of matter, good and evil, selfishness and unselfishness, disintegration and integration. At times the goal became half visible on the horizon, to disappear again and again to become visible. The fact that men do not know what they do is an excuse for them, but this should also teach them to realize that they are the tools in the hands of some Being whose purpose they can-

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 363, 397.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.



not understand but who is looking after their best interests.<sup>49</sup> This secret in the world process which we are unable to explain, this unconscious striving of man without knowledge of the goal but in the service of the Conscious Will, is what Strindberg calls the mystical in history.<sup>50</sup>

The relation of this Conscious Will and the will of man forms an important topic in Strindberg's historical theory, altho he devotes comparatively little space to it. He touches on it briefly at the end of "Världshistoriens mystik" where he gives the general findings of his historical studies. He sees in the progress of history "such a combination of free will and compulsion" that he feels forced "on the one hand to recognize the freedom of the human will to a certain extent,<sup>51</sup> and, on the other hand, to admit the existence of a necessity which according to circumstances restricts the endeavor of the individual and brings out the synthesis." The great Synthesist who unites the opposites and keeps up the equilibrium, "is no man, and can be no other than the invisible law maker, who in full freedom changes the laws according to changed conditions."<sup>52</sup>

A more extended application of the theory that man in trying to carry out his own designs in reality furthers the plans of God, is found in *En blå bok* I (written in 1906 and published in 1907), one of the volumes giving a synthesis of Strindberg's philosophy of life. In this work the principle is laid down that everything serves and in particular that evil often serves good. The book is made up partly of discourses held at times by the "Teacher" and at times by the "Disciple." In one of these, the former says that to-morrow the knowledge of to-day will be

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 397-398.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 396-397.

<sup>51</sup> Hence Erdmann's interpretation that "we are therefore mechanical puppets without will and without soul" (*August Strindberg*, 237), needs modification.

<sup>52</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 398.

only straw in which something else grows; even error serves as fertilizer; everything serves everything.<sup>53</sup> Later in the same book the "Disciple" speaks of the evil influences a rational education had on him and his generation. "We who were led astray," he says, "later led others astray, but let us thank God that no harm has been done. Everything serves, and we have been allowed to serve as warning examples, and that is something."<sup>54</sup>

In the article "The Black Science," the "Teacher" speaks of the good that this science has accomplished. Everything serves, he says, and error often becomes the promoter of truth.<sup>55</sup> To exemplify this, he cites the materialists, who toward the end of the century just gone began to investigate hidden phenomena and one day discovered man's power in an hypnotic condition to look into the far distant, see the invisible, and penetrate the future. Thus they proved the possibility of a prophetic art and of miracles. Another example cited is that of the theosophists, who dug up some of "the good old wisdom" and yet went so far in their hostility toward Christianity as to send a prophet into India to warn the missionaries. In time, however, they began to re-examine Christianity. They were then prepared to accept and to understand the mysteries about Christ's incarnation in the flesh, and the atonement, the sacraments, and the miracles. Finally one of their prophets, a woman, wrote a book explaining and defending Christianity. "All paths," says the Teacher, "seem to lead to Christ, and no one has served Christianity to such an extent as the materialistic

<sup>53</sup> S.S., XLVI, 66.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-99.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the statement "Everything contains Yes and No," which Strindberg attributes to Jacob Boehme, and the doctrine that everything is produced by its opposite, which he attributes to Plato (*Svarta fanor*, S.S., XLI, 125). Note also reference to Boehme and Hegel in this connection in *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 216, and, in particular, 217.

occultists ("de materialistiska ockultisterna") and the atheistic theosophists. Young France has become Christianized by the heathen. . . ."<sup>56</sup>

Just as each individual and each thing has a supreme purpose to serve, so each country, according to Strindberg, has a mission to fulfill in world history. This view had appeared in the early nineties.<sup>57</sup> In the article "Vad är Ryssland?" (1892) on the formation of an alliance between France and Russia, Strindberg took up the question of the place and mission of the latter. With the baptism of Vladimir he sees Russia's entrance upon the stage of European history in order to fulfill her mission as a bulwark against Asia.<sup>58</sup> Historians have rightly seen in Russia the heir to the Eastern Roman Empire, which itself inherited ancient culture after the destruction of Rome at the hands of the barbarians. And in spite of the Mongolian invasion, which never was a genuine conquest, Russia never was untrue to her mission. After the fall of Byzantium, Moscow took the place of this city and became the store-house of scientific, artistic, and industrial Hellenic classicism. Ivan III by uniting the different parts of Russia more firmly enabled the country to play its rôle of civilizer. For this reason Strindberg denies to Charles XII the title of a statesman with foresight, since he tried to hinder Russia in her struggle against the barbarians who were threatening Europe. In particular, Russia deserves credit for having driven away the Mongolians, checked the Turks, reduced the uncivilized tribes, and given these a place in the boundary guard. Furthermore, the Czars have cultivated Siberia and by the conquest of the Caspian Sea opened waterways to the very heart of Asia.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> S.S., XLVI, 106-107.

<sup>57</sup> It need not be assumed that this view was at that time directly associated with the idea of a "Conscious Will." For a still earlier example of this idea, see below, p. 83, footnote 63.

<sup>58</sup> *Efterslätter*, S.S., LIV, 316-317.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 317-319.

In "Världshistoriens mystik," written eleven years later, this theory is unfolded and further illustrated. Hungary is characterized as the bulwark against Islam, while the mission of Spain is given as that of laying the Inca kingdom waste<sup>60</sup> for coming generations for purposes which we cannot know.<sup>61</sup>

The mission of England has been that of starting revolutions. With Henry VIII this country makes a definite entrance into world history. Henry deposed the Pope. This constituted a separation from Rome and bore fruit a hundred years later, for Charles I was beheaded the year after the Peace of Westphalia. In 1689, a hundred years before the French Revolution, the Declaration of Rights was issued. This act, we are told, marks the beginning of the period of revolutions. The will of the people becomes conscious and the rights of man are recognized.<sup>62</sup> The chief mission of the Jews scattered all over the world without a country of their own, our author conceives to be the spreading of the belief in one true God; altho he recognizes also the service they have rendered by their work in finance and their transmission of oriental science and philosophy.<sup>63</sup> The purpose of Prussia, as he sees it, was twofold: first, to serve as a balance and prevent Russia from becoming too powerful; secondly, to become the center of a Northern Germany against the Romanized South Germany.<sup>64</sup> The mission of France has been to spread Hellenic-Roman civilization, and thru the brief career of Napoleon to rouse Europe out of her sleep.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> "Lägga i träda," make fallow ground out of.

<sup>61</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 354-355.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 373. In "Kvarstadsresan" (1884), a part of *Likt och olik* II, Strindberg gives the Europeanization of the nations of Europe as the mission of the Jews. This mission, he says, they are perhaps fulfilling contrary to their will, as is Christianity (S.S., XVII, 21-22).

<sup>64</sup> "Världshistoriens mystik," S.S., LIV, 376.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

As a corollary to the proposition that each country has a mission to fulfill, Strindberg propounds the doctrine that when this mission has ceased to exist, the country has no longer a place in world history. As early as 1890, in the article "*Franska insatser i svenska kulturen*," we find this principle applied to Sweden. That country declined after the Peace of Westphalia, rose again under Charles XII to shine for a brief moment in world history, and then disappeared. Sweden's mission at that time was to serve as a bulwark against Asia. But as soon as Russia emerged out of barbarism, this was no longer necessary, and Sweden ceased to have a political mission, and disappeared out of world history.<sup>66</sup>

This principle is also made to explain the decline of the Roman power. All of Northern Europe, we are told in "*Världshistoriens mystik*," was tired of Rome and wanted to become emancipated. The peoples of this section found it unfitting that only Spaniards and South Germans should possess the imperial crown in a distant country, which had served its time and in reality belonged to heathendom and primitive history, altho it had become Christianized.<sup>67</sup> In Poland Strindberg sees another country that had outlived its usefulness. He considers it a mark of the utmost folly on the part of Charles XII that he tried to preserve it at a time when it had become entirely superfluous and hence was destined to fall away as an organ which had no purpose to serve.<sup>68</sup>

God's hand in history has been an impartial one. Providence is just as ready to make use of one man as another. In the discussion of the activities of Mohammed and Gregory the Great, he says, "Would it not seem as if the Conscious Will in history just as gladly made use of its friend Mohammed as of

<sup>66</sup> *S.S.*, XXVII, 110.

<sup>67</sup> "*Världshistoriens mystik*," *S.S.*, LIV, 368.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

Gregory the Great to promote its purpose, unfathomable to man?"<sup>69</sup> The struggle between the Mohammedans and the Christians is something like a chess game played on a colossal scale by a single player. This player moves both black and white, is absolutely impartial, takes when he should, makes plans for both sides, is partial to both sides and to neither, figures everything out ahead of time, and has one single purpose—to retain balance and justice and to end the game with a draw.<sup>70</sup> Another instance of this impartiality of God appears in the crusades. Thru these, the Christians became acquainted with the Arabians, saw the virtues of these, particularly in the case of Saladin, and learned that the Christian faith was not the only right one. The Christian saw that God loved his different children in the same degree. This gave rise to a light touch of scepticism and a kind of meditation known under the name of Humanism and Renascence.<sup>71</sup>

In a general way, the survey of universal history convinces Strindberg that there are many mansions in the courts of the Lord, that one child is not disinherited for the sake of another, and that no nation and no religion can be said to have the great teacher, i.e., God, on its side.<sup>72</sup>

We have already seen in Chapter II that our author considers the great process in world history a process of unification. This is, according to his theory, the goal of the "Conscious Will." It is also the goal towards which men unconsciously strive.<sup>73</sup> We have seen that one phase of this unity as conceived by Strindberg in 1903, and expressed in "Världshistoriens mystik," was religious unity and included (as a movement toward this unity) a union of the different Christian

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 355-356.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>73</sup> See pp. 79-80, above.



creeds.<sup>74</sup> In his later thinking, however, we find a change of attitude toward the Christian religion. From considering it as one of many religions having a legitimate place in the world and one of the elements going to make up the religious life of the future, he came to look upon it as the one true religion and the one which will ultimately absorb all the others.<sup>75</sup> This must lead, of course, to a change in the author's attitude toward the underlying purpose in history. The clash of nation against nation and religion against religion can no longer end in a draw as in "Världshistoriens mystik," but the "Conscious Will" shapes the conflict toward the ultimate victory of the Christian faith. This new attitude is seen in *En blå bok* (1906-1907), which, as we have seen, gives a synthesis of Strindberg's religious and philosophic views.

Before entering upon an examination of passages in which the superiority of the Christian religion is stressed, we need to note that even in this work there is a recognition of other religions as having their legitimate place. Thus when the "Disciple" asks, "Which religion is the best one?" the "Teacher" answers that for each particular country its own religion is the best one. It is a great advantage, he says, for a nation to have a religion that is homogeneous.<sup>76</sup> The superiority of the Chris-

<sup>74</sup> Cf. pp. 59-60, above.

<sup>75</sup> A beginning of this tendency to regard Christianity as above the other religions may be found perhaps in the emphasis laid on the entrance of that religion into occidental civilization. Cf. p. 53, above, also "Världshistoriens mystik," *S.S.*, LIV, 341, 347.

<sup>76</sup> *S.S.*, XLVI, 20-21. This sentiment is not inconsistent with the idea of the superiority of the Christian religion. It is probably only a recognition of other religions as temporarily having a legitimate place under it. The idea quoted here is found also in *Svarta fanor*, a novel written in 1907. Falkenberg reads a dialog which he composed. This touched on the heathen and their religions. Every religion, he says in this dialog, has a subjective power for those who believe in it (*S.S.*, XLI, 202-203).

tian religion is, however, asserted later in the same work. The "Disciple" says, "I believe in Christianity as a world historic fact, with which a new period has begun and is continuing. I believe, therefore, that at some future time all nations shall bend their knees in the name of Jesus Christ. Every time the heathen get the upper hand, I shall consider it a trial and not believe immediately that God is with them and against his own."<sup>77</sup> A few pages later in the same work, the superiority of Christianity is again asserted. It does not, says the "Disciple," lie behind us, as the gentlemen with the evolutionary theory would have us believe. On the contrary it lies above everything, behind us, at our side, before us. Heathen of all kinds really created their gods in their own image, but with Christianity came the transcendent God and showed himself to men, those with a good will who were able to understand him. For that reason, Christianity is the beginning, middle, and end of world history, "from and to which everything is flowing," in the words of Hegel.<sup>78</sup>

This confidence in the ultimate triumph of Christianity is reiterated by the "Teacher" in the same work. The struggle, he says, between heathendom and Christianity is the struggle which is now going on in the world. But as surely as Christianity is later in time than heathendom, so surely does the future belong to Christianity, even tho for the moment the ape-men ("Äfflingarne," i.e., those who believe that man descended from an ape) have the upper hand.<sup>79</sup>

We have already noticed in treating the doctrine that everything serves a divine purpose, that Strindberg sees in the studies of the materialists and theosophists an aid to Christianity. All ways, he says, lead to Christ.<sup>80</sup> Two passages

<sup>77</sup> S.S., XLVI, 97.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-107. Cf. also pp. 80-82, above.

from *En blå bok* are of particular interest as indicating his idea on the relation of the other religions to Christianity and the superiority of the latter. In one of these, he has the "Disciple" say that when Lessing proclaims in *Nathan* the equal merit of all religions, he has failed to understand Christianity, which is the beginning of world history.<sup>81</sup> The other is the passage in which he explains the genesis of this book. The first paragraph incidentally deals with the origin of another of Strindberg's works. He had been reading, he tells us, of Goethe's intention to write a "breviarium universale," a collection of devout sayings for members of all religious confessions. This gave Strindberg the idea of writing *Historiska miniatyrer*,<sup>82</sup> in which he tried to find God's plan in world history. He started from Israel but may have made the mistake, he admits, of giving the other religions a place beside it, when they should have had a place under it.<sup>83</sup>

It is evident that the "Conscious Will" of 1903, which observed such a scrupulous impartiality between Mohammed and Gregory the Great, has by 1906 become the God of the Christians.

### SUMMARY

The first suggestion of a departure from the anti-religious and atheistic attitude of the later eighties and early nineties on the part of Strindberg is probably to be found in what Lamm terms a note of weariness of dogmatic atheism in *Himmelrikets nycklar* in 1892. This attitude away from materialism and atheism emerges more clearly by August, 1894. By the end of the year, he has arrived at a definite belief in the existence of an "Invisible Hand" guiding his fate. This belief

<sup>81</sup> S.S., XLVI, 212. Strindberg evidently does not catch the full significance of Lessing's play.

<sup>82</sup> Written in 1905.

<sup>83</sup> S.S., XLVI, 404.

becomes strengthened by degrees, particularly under the influence of Swedenborg. Strindberg's belief in a personal God does not immediately carry with it a belief in Christianity. His acceptance of the latter dates from 1896. His religion from that time is a kind of "creedless Christianity."

The first expression in a critical work of a belief in Providence as an active factor in history, we find in "*Världshistoriens mystik*" (1903), altho the idea was evidently in his mind before this time.

In this work, he expounds the following theory. He sees in history the working out of a definite plan conceived by a "Conscious Will." He sees this plan worked out thru the agency of men, partly acting as free agents, partly under the restraint imposed by the Divine Will, often trying to accomplish ends of their own and ignorant of the purposes they are called to further. In this plan, Strindberg sees everything serving: error serving truth, and evil serving good. Each country has its mission to fulfill, and having fulfilled this mission, relinquishes its place in world history.

In the execution of this divine plan, in 1903 he sees an attitude of impartiality on the part of the Supreme Being, who is equally favorable toward all nations and all religions. As the final purpose of the "Conscious Will," he sees integration or unification, including the unification of religion. By 1906, the latter has come to mean the gradual merging of all religions into one Christian faith. With this new attitude toward Christianity, we note a changed idea of the "Conscious Will." The Supreme Being, who in the earlier conception was considered as impartial, has now become the God of the Christians, ready to protect his own and leading them to final victory.

The relation between Strindberg's personal religious faith and his interpretation of history offers some interesting points. His conception of a "Conscious Will" guiding the events of

history is merely the application to world history of the belief in the "Invisible Hand" guiding the events of his own life.<sup>84</sup> His interpretation of God is the same in his personal religious convictions and in his studies on historical themes, that of the deist.<sup>85</sup> In the *Inferno*, he says that the Powers ("makterna") have revealed themselves to him as one or more persons governing the progress of the world and the fates of men consciously and hypostatically; in "Världshistoriens mystik," he sees the "Conscious Will" standing above everything, guiding the world from without, conducting the affairs on the plan of a big chess game. Just as he feels that there is a definite plan in his own life, so he sees a design in the events of history.

Finally, it may be noted that Strindberg's idea of the triumph of Christianity, the merging of all Christian faiths into one, and the absorption of other religions into this one faith, is paralleled in his own religious attitude. At times he dreamed of a return of the different Protestant churches to the Roman Catholic Church. He suggested this as early as 1890; then, however, as an academic theory which has no basis in his own religious conviction,<sup>86</sup> since he was at this time an atheist. Later he sees it as something indicated by the actual progress of events. It is then associated in his own religious experience with a personal longing for a return to the Mother Church. Lastly the religion of the future becomes in his mind a kind of a creedless Christianity, a conception with which his own later religious belief is in accord.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Möhlig, *Strindbergs Weltanschauung*, 91.

<sup>85</sup> I am using the word "deist" here in the sense given it by H. H. Lane in his *Evolution and Christian Faith*, 158-160, i.e., one who conceives God as governing the universe from the outside, emphasizing the transcendence of God to the exclusion of his immanence. Cf. also Hibben's *Problems of Philosophy*, 67-68, and the article on "deism" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

<sup>86</sup> It is probably a further indication of the monistic tendency which his thinking had already then acquired.

## PART II

### The Interpretation of History In Strindberg's Dramas and Narratives





## CHAPTER IV

### THE EVOLUTIONARY CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

#### THE IDEA OF CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

The idea of gradual and continued development, which is the chief element of the evolutionary conception of history, is particularly prominent in Strindberg's earlier historical works.<sup>1</sup> In *Mäster Olof* (1872) stress is often laid on the fact that all development is gradual. Lars denies the possibility of any radical and revolutionary change when he tells his brother that three million people will not give up their faith in a moment.<sup>2</sup> Gerdt stresses the fact that much time, in fact centuries, must elapse before the seed sowed by the individual can take root and bear fruit in the hearts of the multitude.<sup>3</sup> The idea of continued development is also closely connected with the theme of the relativity of truth as treated in this play.<sup>4</sup>

In *Gamla Stockholm* (1880-82), an interest in development appears in the author's treatment of several popular usages. In the dance around the Christmas tree, he sees the survival of what was once an act of religious worship.<sup>5</sup> The custom of eating eggs at Easter he considers a possible survival of the Catholic custom of fasting during that festival.<sup>6</sup> In describing the professional horseback performances, he points out that these came into use after the passing of the games and tournaments of the nobles (this statement by implication suggests

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for theory p. 7, above.

<sup>2</sup> *H.D.* I, 254.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. pp. 125 ff., below.

<sup>5</sup> *S.S.*, VI, 48.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

their origin). He then follows their history down to modern times.<sup>7</sup> He traces the history of the gypsies back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the shadow play *Den söndriga bron* to the thirteenth.<sup>8</sup>

In *Svenska folket* (1881), the idea of development expands into a much more important factor.<sup>9</sup> Closely connected with it is the emphasis on origin, as for instance when one custom or institution is presented as having unfolded from another. Particularly is stress laid on the fact that nothing springs into existence except as a result of a line of development. In his introduction to the work, Strindberg discusses the national costume. He proposes to show, he says, that this is not primitive; first, because "it is our duty to contradict those who doubt the existence of a development"; and secondly, because "our regret for what we have lost will be less keen when we see that what is now happening has been happening in all times."<sup>10</sup> Again in the chapter treating the life and manners in the cities during the sixteenth century, we are told that costume is not something absolutely new, but a continuation of the old and a growth out of it, "for not even fashion dares take any very big jump,"—a theory which is illustrated by abundant details.<sup>11</sup> To explain the development of the farm house in upper Sweden, the author shows how, beginning with one room, it grew by the addition of other rooms, one at a time, and by gradual changes in construction.<sup>12</sup> In the chapter treating the architecture, painting, and sculpture of the Middle Ages, it is pointed out that the fine arts change just as much as dress, dishes, and similar things

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-93.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 177, 51-53.

<sup>9</sup> The difference in this respect between *Gamla Stockholm* and *Svenska folket* is probably due to the difference in the subjects under treatment.

<sup>10</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 372 ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

which are subject to the caprice of fashion, even tho in referring to the arts we speak of "styles" rather than "fashions." Indeed, the entire chapter is devoted to the demonstration of this continued change and development thru the period under discussion.<sup>13</sup>

The theory of gradual and continued historical development does not play any prominent part in the historical plays, except in *Mäster Olof* as indicated above. This can, no doubt, be explained partly by the fact that the idea does not lend itself readily to dramatic treatment. It does appear, however, in *Historiska miniatyrer* (1905). Thus in "Flaccus och Maro" Virgil points out to Horace that every period in history is in a manner a period of decadence and at the same time a preparation for something new, so that one epoch merges into another. The Mantuan poet then applies this theory to the Greece and Rome of his own time.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, it is applied to the field of religion in "Tusenåriga riket," when Silvester II denies the existence of anything inherently new, and supports his contention with the statement of Augustine, that the germs of Christianity have existed since the beginning of the world, and that the truths proclaimed by Christ were not new truths but merely old truths further developed.<sup>15</sup>

Altho the idea occurs but rarely in *Nya svenska öden* (*Hövdingaminnen*), it appears in the explanation of canonization in the Catholic Church. This Dr. Laurentius derives from the old Roman institution of apotheosis.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 277-286. Cf. also for other instances of the theory of continued development *ibid.*, 34, 330.

<sup>14</sup> S.S., XLII, 90.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. There is in this connection also a monistic element. Cf. pp. 51-54, above.

<sup>16</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, I, 164-165.

## THE CONTINUITY OF HISTORY

A corollary of the evolutionary theory strongly stressed by Strindberg is the idea of the unbroken continuity of history. It would, however, hardly be safe to attribute this conception entirely to the influence of evolutionary philosophy. The unbroken continuity of history impressed itself on the mind of the dramatist long before the period of modern science. It has an ethical and artistic basis in the desire to merge the finite and the infinite. The fact is, that Strindberg learned from Shakspeare many of the methods which he uses in the historical plays for suggesting historical continuity. All that we can assert is that the conception as it appears in Strindberg's works is in line with the evolutionary interpretation of history which we find expressed in his earlier writings and which evidently remained with him thru life.

The idea of the continuity of history does not come to expression to any great extent in *Gamla Stockholm* and *Svenska folket*, except as it is implied in the idea of development discussed above. In the historical plays and in the later historical sketches, it shows itself, first of all, in frequent reference to the facts of earlier history. We find a beginning of this method in *Mäster Olof* (1872), a play which does not stress the conception of the continuity of history as much as the later dramas. Indeed the few historical references that are found in Strindberg's first historical play<sup>17</sup> are perhaps made without any conscious intention of recalling earlier history. In the beginning of the second act, we find reference to the Käcklinge murders, which took place in 1389, more than a century and a quarter before the events of the play. The German calls Christian II a "blood hound," and the Dane objects, "You must absolutely

<sup>17</sup> Some of Strindberg's earlier plays have more or less of an historical background; however, as they do not in any appreciable degree show his historical theories, they have not with the exception of *Mäster Olof* been treated in this study.

not talk about blood! Do you remember the K  pplinge murders when the Germans . . ."<sup>18</sup> At this point he is interrupted by Windrank.<sup>19</sup> References to comparatively recent events appear quite incidental, as when the victory of Gustav Vasa over Christian II is referred to by the German, who contends that L  beck "gave Sweden its liberator when it stood on the brink of ruin,"<sup>20</sup> or again when the Nobleman refers to the reign of Christian II for an example of an effective method of subjugating a country.<sup>21</sup>

Many years later, when the author began his great series of historical dramas, he shows a highly developed technic for keeping before his audience the unbroken bond which knits the present and the past.<sup>22</sup>

Of particular interest is the method which characterizes *Folkungasagan* (1899). Here the action of the play appears, as in the ancient tragedies, not as an action complete in itself, but rather as the culmination of an action extending far back in time.<sup>23</sup> This is suggested by the name itself. What we are wit-

<sup>18</sup> Some of the German sympathizers of Albrecht of Mecklenburg imprisoned a number of Swedes in a wooden house on K  pplingeholmen (now called Blasieholmen) and set fire to it.

<sup>19</sup> *H.D.* I, 183. The introduction out of a clear sky of historical material more or less irrelevant is interesting from the point of view of technic. In its economy the device here also foreshadows Strindberg's later method, which aims at producing historical atmosphere by a mere reference to a name, place, or event.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>22</sup> In the discussion which follows, references are made also to the later volumes containing historical sketches.

<sup>23</sup> This should, of course, not be confused with the modern analytic play, like *Die Ahnfrau*, *La Tour de Nesle*, *Gengangere* (*Ghosts*), etc., where the previous history is developed thruout the play. In *Folkungasagan*, as in the ancient drama, the history preceding the play is presumably known to the audience. Frequent references to earlier history are made, but in order to impress the audience with the fact



nessing is not a conflict centering around Magnus and his reign, but rather the end of a family struggle, which has been going on for over a century. This is made clear by the conception of Magnus as an atoning sacrifice, the one who, tho guiltless,<sup>24</sup> is to be sacrificed before the destiny of the Folkungs can be fulfilled. This fact is recalled to the mind of the audience several times. We are reminded that Magnus is the son of a duke who was starved to death, and that his cousin, the legal heir to the throne, was killed.<sup>25</sup> In fact it is the murder of this cousin which, according to the Possessed Woman, constitutes the crime for which Magnus, altho innocent of it himself, must suffer;<sup>26</sup> and Brigitta tells him that by his fall the series of crimes which began with the murders at Herrevadsbro and ended with the crimes of Håtuna and Nyköping will be atoned.<sup>27</sup> The refer-

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that they are witnessing the end of a long struggle, rather than to give them any information.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. for Magnus's tragic guilt and complex motivation of his downfall p. 123, below.

<sup>25</sup> *H.D.* I, 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31. *Herrevadsbro* was the place where in 1251 Earl Birger, the founder of the Folkung line, defeated Knut Magnusson, who laid claim to the throne of Sweden, which Birger's son Magnus ascended in 1250. Birger decapitated the leaders. Strindberg follows *Rimkrönikan* (the *Rimed Chronicle*) in assuming that Birger had promised safety to the leaders of the rebellion, altho this fact is questioned by modern historians (Montelius, *Sveriges historia från äldsta tid till våra dagar*, I, 406-407). In 1306, King Birger Magnusson invited his brothers Erik and Valdemar to a banquet in Håtuna, and was treacherously attacked by them and imprisoned (*ibid.*, 435). To Nyköping the same King Birger invited his brothers in 1317, captured them and kept them in prison, where they died, perhaps thru starvation, in the following year. Birger, however, found himself forced to flee, and his son Magnus Birgersson, the cousin of King Magnus of *Folkungasagan*, was killed. The last named Magnus, who was then only four years old, was made king in 1319 (*ibid.*, 442-445).

ence to Simon and Jude, the day on which Magnus Birgersson was killed,<sup>28</sup> connects the action with the last of a series of crimes for which Magnus's downfall is the expiation.<sup>29</sup>

Another method used by Strindberg to unite the present with the past, is the "anniversary device." An example of this occurs in *Gustav Vasa* (1899), where the title character suddenly realizes that it is Midsummer Day, the very day on which "a generation ago" he entered Stockholm.<sup>30</sup> In *Gustav Adolf* (1900) the one-hundredth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession is celebrated in Wolgast,<sup>31</sup> while still earlier history is suggested by a reference to the anniversary of St. Louis.<sup>32</sup> In *Kristina* (1903), the first scene takes place on the anniversary of the death of Gustav Adolf.<sup>33</sup>

The author sometimes unites the history of the play with earlier history by representing a certain movement or struggle in the play as an incident in a movement or struggle of long duration. *Folkungasagan* (1899) as representing the end of a long continued family struggle, has been mentioned already.<sup>34</sup> In *Erik XIV* (1899) there is given to the enmity between Erik and Johan something of the atmosphere of a renewal or continuation of the Folkung strife; thru the Folkung blood which Johan has inherited from his mother, the seed of the discord inseparably connected with that line has entered into the royal family.<sup>35</sup> The hostility between Erik and the Stures is por-

<sup>28</sup> *H.D.* I, 66-67.

<sup>29</sup> In a more limited sense, *Carl XII* (1901) belongs to this class; here, however, what we see is the culmination of a single reign rather than that of a longer period. Cf. *Öppna brev, S.S.*, L, 251-252.

<sup>30</sup> *H.D.* I, 374.

<sup>31</sup> *H.D.* II, 15, 35.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. pp. 97-98, above.

<sup>35</sup> *H.D.* I, 399, 445. Carl is also of Folkung descent (*ibid.*, 445).

trayed as an incident in a longer struggle rather than as an isolated fact. The Stures, like Johan, inherit a stain of blood. They are descended from the man who murdered Engelbrekt, a fact suggested by Erik as the possible reason why they never obtained the throne. They, like Johan, are descendants of the Folkungs, thus bearing within them, too, the germ of strife.<sup>86</sup> The more or less continual enmity between the Vasas and the Stures is keenly realized by Erik, who, whether rightly or not, feels himself ever hampered by the rival family. "Always Sture," he says, upon learning that Måns Knekt got his idea of having Karin marry Max from Svante Sture.<sup>87</sup> There is in this play another struggle that is felt to be one of long standing and to have its roots far back in history, the struggle between the nobility on the one hand and the king and the people on the other. In this, Göran sees a conflict that has been going on since the days of Ingjald Illrâda (one of the legendary kings of the seventh century), thru the times of Earl Birger and the Folkungs down to Christian the Tyrant. In each case the king and the people have been victorious, a fact which makes Göran rather optimistic as to the outcome of the struggle which is then in progress.<sup>88</sup> In *Gustav Adolf* (1900), we see the hero hampered by the fact that those around him are descendants of men killed by his father at what was called the Blood Bath of Linköping, or who in other ways have inherited grievances against the Vasa line—in some cases members of the Sture family.<sup>89</sup> In this play, however, it is not a conflict or enmity

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 395-396.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 414.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 405-406.

<sup>89</sup> *H.D.* II, 27-28, 64, 84, 147-148, 161-162, 163-164. It should be noted that in these inherited enmities we find the evolutionary doctrine of heredity in biology transferred to the field of history. Cf. p. 9, footnote 28, above.

which is an episode of a longer family quarrel that we see,<sup>40</sup> it is rather a spectre of the past which prevents that complete friendship between Gustav and those around him which he would have liked to see and which might perhaps have been realized, but for this bloody memory.<sup>41</sup>

The introduction of a character who has played a part in earlier history sometimes serves as a link to connect the present with the past. At the end of *Gustav Vasa* (1899), the Dalecarlian who enters and asks permission to go against Dacke with the rest, turns out to be the skee runner Engelbrekt who many years before had overtaken Gustav near the Norwegian boundary and asked him to return and lead his countrymen in a revolt against Christian.<sup>42</sup>

Frequently the character thus introduced plays a part in an earlier drama of Strindberg's. This method is particularly effective in uniting organically the history of the play with earlier history in the mind of the audience. The purpose of the introduction of Agda and her child in *Erik XIV* seems to be mainly to connect this play with *Gustav Vasa*. In the earlier drama, we learn of Agda's attachment to Jakob Israel, and the plight resulting from her indiscretion;<sup>43</sup> in *Erik XIV*, she appears with her illegitimate child. Göran takes care of the two, and King Erik recalls Agda's earlier position in the "Blå Duva,"<sup>44</sup> the place of her first appearance in *Gustav Vasa*.<sup>45</sup> In *Engelbrekt* (1901), the action of the play is tied to earlier

<sup>40</sup> Axel Ericsson Sparre forms an exception to this statement (*H.D.* II, 67-68, 180).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>42</sup> *H.D.* I, 377.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 317. Strindberg thought of publishing *Mäster Olof*, *Gustav Vasa*, and *Erik XIV* together as *Vasasagan* I, II, III (*S.S.*, XXXI, 405-406).

history especially thru Bishop Styrbjörn, who is an active character in *Folkungasagan* and to whose activity in connection with the dethroning of Magnus and the destruction of the Folkung power the dramatist makes frequent references.<sup>46</sup> In *Kristina* (1903), the impression is conveyed that the Queen is constantly surrounded by officers of her father, characters familiar to us from *Gustav Adolf*, and that she is oppressed by their greatness won in the Thirty Years' War, tho, to be sure, only two of them appear on the stage.<sup>47</sup> In *Riksföreståndaren* (1909), eight of the thirteen characters are already known to us from *Sista Riddaren*.

A place with historic traditions sometimes furnishes material for a review of earlier events. Thus in *Gustav Adolf*, past history is suggested when we are led to Auerbach's Keller, so rich in historic and legendary atmosphere thru its alleged associations with Faust and Luther.<sup>48</sup> In the same play, the Wartburg is introduced to recall St. Elizabeth, Wolfram, Walther, and Luther,<sup>49</sup> and the Castle Church in Wittenberg suggests six historical personages as well as Luther's theses.<sup>50</sup>

The dramatist at times uses genealogy as a means of turning our mind to the past. Attention is called to some historic event in connection with an ancestor of a character in the play. In *Gustav Adolf* (1900), this method is frequently used. One instance of it occurs in the first scene where it is combined with the "procession motif." The Sergeant-Major enumerates the generals for the Finnish Ensign, and comments on each as he does so, and, in most cases, connects the name with some ancestor in Swedish history. The effect of this is so much like a lecture in history that we are inclined to exclaim with the Fin-

<sup>46</sup> *H.D.* I, 97, 103-105.

<sup>47</sup> *H.D.* II, 200, 213.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

nish Ensign, "Isn't it as if the entire history of Sweden was taking a walk out in God's open nature?"<sup>51</sup>

In *Gustav III* (1903), Ribbing and Horn more or less playfully boast of their ancestors, and so bring out the fact that Christian the Tyrant killed three Ribbings and Carl IX two of them, and that Peder Ribbing was the judge at the Blood Bath in Linköping and condemned to death Christer Horn.<sup>52</sup> In *Sista Riddaren* (1908), Johan Månsson Natt och Dag, the son of Engelbrekt's murderer, takes a fairly prominent part. The odium which attaches to him on account of his father's crime recalls to us the times of Engelbrekt, while Anna Bjelke refers to her grandfather Ture Turesson, who betrayed his country to Christian I of Denmark.<sup>53</sup>

Another method of suggesting earlier history is that of formal historical retrospection. This is used in *Gustav Adolf*, when Johan Banér reflects on the difference between the peasant Gustav Eriksson and his grandson Gustav Adolf, before whom the monarchs of Europe are suing for peace, and then in a general way discusses the preceding thousand years of Swedish history,<sup>54</sup> and in *Sista Riddaren*, when we are told of the progress of Swedish history from the Kalmar Union (1397) down to the time of the play, when Erik Trolle is Protector.<sup>55</sup>

Our author does not shun physical devices to bind the present and the past in the minds of his audience. In *Gustav Vasa*, the first act suggests by its stage setting the history immediately preceding. In the house of the miner Måns Nilsson in Aspe-

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28. Here as in general in *Gustav Adolf*, an additional purpose is served by the genealogical references, viz., to make us conscious of a family conflict of long duration. Cf. pp. 100-101, above.

<sup>52</sup> *H.D.* II, 400-401.

<sup>53</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 38-39.

<sup>54</sup> *H.D.* II, 131.

<sup>55</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 19.



boda, there are, as part of the stage decorations, pictures showing Gustav's adventures in Dalecarlia, his visit to the home of Jon in Svärdsjö, the famous threshing scene at Anders Persson's, etc.<sup>56</sup>

*Erik XIV* (1899), thru the stage setting of the first act, identical with that of the last act of *Gustav Vasa*, gives the impression of being a continuation of the earlier play rather than an independent drama. The most effective use of stage decoration and scene arrangement is found in *Riksföreståndaren* (1909). Here the same stage settings are used as for the scenes of *Sista Riddaren*, but in reversed order. The first scene thus immediately recalls the last scene of the earlier play, while the later scenes recall correspondingly earlier scenes of *Sista Riddaren*.<sup>57</sup>

Identity of name may give occasion to historical references. In *Gustav Vasa* (1899), the name of the skee runner who called Gustav back from the Norwegian boundary line constitutes an excuse for reference to the patriotic leader Engelbrekt, who delivered Sweden from the tyrannical rule of Erik of Pommerania in the preceding century. Early in the play, Barbro draws from her father the admission that the skee runner had the name of Engelbrekt also.<sup>58</sup> When at the end of the play, the skee runner appears, Gustav, nonplussed at the name, pronounces after him in questioning accents, "En-gel-brekt?" and receives the answer, "Oh, well, that sounds big, but I am not of that family."<sup>59</sup>

Strindberg employs the epic method in Act V of *Folkungasagan* (1899), when Magnus tells Blanche the story of the Folkung line. Here the pictures on the wall representing the earlier

<sup>56</sup> *H.D.* I, 283.

<sup>57</sup> This interlocking is an intentional device borrowed, as Strindberg says, from counterpoint in music (*Sista Riddaren*, 5).

<sup>58</sup> *H.D.* I, 286.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

members of the family serve as successive pivots for the story to turn on.<sup>60</sup>

Sometimes characters refer in an expository manner either to events coming within their own experience or to generally known facts of earlier history. Thus in *Gustav Vasa*, the scene opens with reminiscences of Gustav's earlier adventures, mostly before the liberation of Sweden, in a few cases after his accession to the throne.<sup>61</sup> In the third act, the King himself refers to his dangerous flight from Denmark and to the aid he received from Lübeck.<sup>62</sup> In *Engelbrekt*, Puke recalls to Engelbrekt's mind the unfortunate reign of Albrecht of Mecklenburg and the later accession to the throne of Sweden of Erik of Pomerania thru the influence of Margaret.<sup>63</sup> In *Historiska min-*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-85. Strindberg probably received the suggestion of this scene from Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, Act III, Scene 4, where Don Ruy Gomez points to the pictures of his ancestors, and recites the virtues of each (Hugo, *Drame* II, 84-87). There is, however, one great difference between the methods of the two dramatists. The recital in *Hernani* has an epic quality, yet it serves a dramatic purpose. It motivates, partly at least, Gomez's refusal to surrender Hernani. Magnus's recital, on the other hand, is purely epic, and serves no dramatic purpose. In connection with this we may point out the generally epic character of Strindberg's historical plays, and the general absence of those intense conflicts and the clash of dialog found, for instance, in some of Ibsen's historical dramas. In general, the conflict in the works of the Swedish dramatist is felt as an undercurrent, the contending forces rarely come to a hand-to-hand grapple. For this reason the dialog is usually unimpassioned. The explanation of this is, partly that Strindberg is interested in the larger movements of history, which naturally work slowly and with comparatively little violence; partly that his characters are under the influence of the theory of the relativity of truth, a fact which prevents them from dogmatically proclaiming one-sided ideas.

<sup>61</sup> *H.D.* I, 284-287.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 102. This is a good example of the manner in which Strindberg sometimes introduces historical material rather loosely into his plays. The introduction of such more or less irrelevant matter is often,

*iatyrer* (1905), a story sometimes begins with a review which connects it with earlier history. Thus "Flaccus och Maro" begins by showing how the leadership passed from Athens to Sparta, then in turn to Thebes, Macedonia, and Rome.<sup>64</sup> Again in "Attila," the author states at the beginning that with Constantine the Great Hellas and Rome had ceased to exist and the seat of civilization had been transferred to Constantinople.<sup>65</sup>

Strindberg frequently suggests the continuity of history by foreshadowing later events. To effect this, he employs various methods. Sometimes the ending of a play or story virtually constitutes the beginning of something new. Thus in *Mäster Olof* (1872), the entrance of Vilhelm at the end of the play is probably meant to suggest another *Mäster Olof*, whose part is to begin where that of the hero ends.<sup>66</sup> This effect is heightened in the poetic version, where Olof in his last speech, after the departure of Vilhelm, addresses the latter as the one who is now setting out on the sea of life on which he himself has suffered shipwreck, and encourages him to steer his boat "high against the wind," not, however, without warning him that he too will in the end fall short of his ideals.<sup>67</sup> This method is used also in *Folkungasagan*. At the end of this play the announced advance of Albrecht of Mecklenburg marks the beginning of a new reign.<sup>68</sup> At the end of *Erik XIV*, the reign of Johan III

as here, made possible by the naturalistic dialog which skips readily from one subject to another in the manner of easy every-day conversation. Strindberg calls especial attention to this kind of dialog in the preface to *Fröken Julie* (1888) (*S.S.*, XXIII, 108).

<sup>64</sup> *S.S.*, XLII, 81.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>66</sup> *H.D.* I, 278. Cf. Lindberg, *Tillkomsten av Strindbergs "Mäster Olof,"* 102. Lindberg calls attention to the fact that this device is frequently employed by Shakspere.

<sup>67</sup> *Romantiska dramer*, I, 262.

<sup>68</sup> *H.D.* I, 90.

is ushered in. The later strife between the new king and his younger brother is also suggested. As Johan and Carl come on the stage, the latter reminds his brother of the agreement made a short time before in the very same act that the two share the throne.<sup>69</sup> This agreement Johan now refuses to acknowledge. The next minute Carl leaves with his retinue. To Johan's question, "Where is my brother going?" Carl replies, "My way, which here separates from yours."<sup>70</sup> At the end of *Kristina*, the Queen's successor is introduced as Carl X Gustav and assumes the attitude of king, altho he has not yet been officially elected.<sup>71</sup> In *Historiska miniatyrer* (1905), the last few lines of a story often contain the germ of later development. Thus at the end of "Egyptiska tråldomen" the discovery of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter foreshadows the liberation of the children of Israel.<sup>72</sup> At the end of "Leontopolis," after the young Hebrew who is passing with his wife and babe has told the Roman the reason for their flight and the prophecy of the expected Messiah, the reader is left to discover the identity of the family in the last two lines, where the husband and wife address each other as Joseph and Mary.<sup>73</sup> The drama *Bjälbo-Jarlen* (1909) ends with the accession of Magnus to the royal power. In connection with this the author takes care to suggest to us the later strife within the Folkung family. Magnus reminds his father, Earl Birger, that it was he who engendered the strife between the brothers. The latter replies that he sees he is the father of a king, and that "a Folkung line has been begotten."<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 444.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 457-458.

<sup>71</sup> *H.D.* II, 267 ff.

<sup>72</sup> *S.S.*, XLII, 27.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>74</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 142-143 Cf. for Strindberg's comment on this, *Öppna brev*, *S.S.*, L, 258.

Sometimes what would naturally be the ending of the play is merely foreshadowed and the play may be said to end ahead of time. This gives to it a fragmentary character and forces the spectator to seek the ending outside of the action represented on the stage. Thus in *Carl XII* in the version which was arranged as an intimate play ("kammarspel"), the last scene, in which the King is killed, is omitted, but a few lines added to the preceding scene suggest the possibility that he may not return.<sup>75</sup> This device is also used in *Gustav III* (1903). At the end of the play, Anckarström is seen aiming a shot at the King. The Queen happens to assume a position between the two, and so prevents the murder. She also warns her spouse, reminds him of the fate of Cæsar, and asks, "Was there not somebody whose name was Brutus?"<sup>76</sup>

An insight into historic development lying beyond the ending of the play is also afforded by the introduction of characters who are known to have played important rôles in later history. Usually the nature of these rôles is more or less definitely suggested. In *Gustav Vasa*, this is accomplished by the appearance of Erik and Johan.<sup>77</sup> The later struggle for the crown and Erik's deposition in favor of Johan are suggested by the enmity

<sup>75</sup> S.S., XXXV, "Anmärkningar," 235-236.

<sup>76</sup> H.D. II, 431-432. Strindberg suggests a similar method for ending *Antony and Cleopatra*. After the death of Antony, he insists, it would have been enough for us merely to hear Cleopatra's decision to commit suicide, since we know from history that she did this and how she did it (*Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 266-267).

<sup>77</sup> Warburg calls attention to the fact that since the action must be considered as taking place during the decade beginning 1540 (tho some of the events represented in the play took place in 1533), the appearance of Erik and Johan constitutes an anachronism. Warburg finds the introduction of Karin particularly unnecessary, since she was not even born at this time and did not meet Erik until after his coronation (Strindbergs nya historiedramer," *Nordisk Tidskrift*, XIII, 93). Strindberg, however, merely uses the method of Shakspeare in making

between the two brothers,<sup>78</sup> by Gustav's statement that he would like to have Johan succeed him instead of Erik,<sup>79</sup> and by Erik's show of shiftlessness, which promises anything but a peaceful reign. Erik's later misfortunes and sad end are also suggested to us by the premonition of Jakob Israel.<sup>80</sup> Johan's leaning toward Catholicism foreshadows the favorable attitude toward that faith which he later displays as king.<sup>81</sup> This method is used at the end of *Riksföreståndaren* (1909), where Olaus Petri, who later plays the part of the Swedish Luther, is introduced and his later work suggested by Gustav Vasa.<sup>82</sup>

Sometimes the report of an event which suggests a new tendency or which is known to have been of importance in the later annals of the country opens a perspective of later history to the audience. In *Sista Riddaren* (1908), the Swedish Reformation is foreshadowed when word is brought that Olaus Petri is willing to perform the burial rites over the body of Sten Sture, who died excommunicated by the Catholic Church.<sup>83</sup> A little further on in the same play, the announcement of the flight of Gustav Vasa from his Danish prison and his arrival in Dalecarlia serves as an anticipation of the later liberation of Sweden.<sup>84</sup>

The name of a place is made to serve a prophetic purpose in *Erik XIV* (1899). In the first scene of the third act the Castle

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us feel the fragmentary character of the play and the continuity of the history of which it represents a part, by "causing the titular hero to share our interest with his successor," as with the English dramatist "the figure of Bolingbroke casts a shadow forward from Richard II," etc. (Warner, *English History in Shakespeare's Plays*, 109).

<sup>78</sup> *H.D.* I, 319-320; 329.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 309, 311.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 361; 372-375.

<sup>82</sup> *Riksföreståndaren*, 121-122.

<sup>83</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 157.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.



of Gripsholm is seen in the distance. In the dialog between Svante Sture and Nils Sture, it is suggested that this castle is Nyköping or Håtuna, the meaning being, of course, that it may serve as a place for the repetition of the deeds for which these places are famous.<sup>85</sup> By a neat device, Strindberg makes Erik Sture misunderstand Svante and Nils. He thinks that they have mistaken the castle, and naïvely says, "Why, that is Gripsholm."<sup>86</sup> This naturally brings to the minds of the audience King Erik's subsequent prison life at Gripsholm, famed in Swedish song and story, and his suspicious death there.<sup>87</sup>

Sometimes more or less definite fear or expectation expressed by a character anticipates later events. Thus in *Gustav Adolf*, the report of the independent spirit of Christina and the dread expressed by her father at the thought that his daughter may embrace another faith than the Lutheran, suggests Christina's later apostacy.<sup>88</sup> In the same play, the probability of a marriage between Christina and Carl, the son of the Count Palatine, and the accession of Carl to the Swedish throne, is discussed.<sup>89</sup> This foreshadows the later engagement of the two and Carl Gustav's accession to the Swedish throne after the abdication of Christina.<sup>90</sup> In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg* (1903), the downfall of the power of the Catholic Church is suggested in the expression that "Rome is to be destroyed."<sup>91</sup> In *Riksföreståndaren*, the impending Protestant revolution in Sweden is seen approaching. The conflict between Gustav Vasa and Bishop Brask is felt by the former as a conflict with Rome,

<sup>85</sup> For historical detail, see above, p. 98, footnote 27.

<sup>86</sup> *H.D.* I, 420.

<sup>87</sup> Johan's earlier imprisonment in Gripsholm is not so well known and probably was not in the mind of the dramatist.

<sup>88</sup> *H.D.* II, 134; 167.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-164.

<sup>90</sup> The two were, however, never married.

<sup>91</sup> *H.D.* II, 457.

"the Rome of the heathen," the tree to which he is putting the ax.<sup>92</sup>

At times Strindberg makes use of prediction or prophecy to open a perspective of later history. In *Kristina*, the Queen predicts that within fifty years Sweden will have lost all of her possessions in Germany.<sup>93</sup> In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, the Wanderer, Dr. Johannes Faust, prophesies that Austria shall rule the world in the time of the great grandson of the emperor then occupying the throne.<sup>94</sup> The prophetic method is used also in some of the stories in *Historiska miniatyrer*. Thus in "Alkibiades" the prophecies that Rome shall rule the world and that Israel shall rule, are interpreted as meaning that Israel is to conquer thru Rome;<sup>95</sup> while in "Flaccus och Maro" the power of Christianity is foreshadowed thru the prophecy of the books from Alexandria.<sup>96</sup> In *Nya svenska öden*, the prediction of Christina cited above is found in the story "Ölandskonungen och den lilla drottningen."<sup>97</sup> In *Sista Riddaren* Mätta Dyre sees in a trance the triumph of Gustav Vasa over the Danes, his coronation, and the retention of the crown in his family for generations.<sup>98</sup>

### THE MATERIAL BASIS OF THINGS

One of the historical theories consequent upon the evolutionary conception is that of the material basis of things.<sup>99</sup> This theory, no doubt, underlies most of Strindberg's earlier historical works. However, it is rarely manifested. The doctrine

<sup>92</sup> *Riksföreståndaren*, 77.

<sup>93</sup> *H.D.* II, 269.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 444.

<sup>95</sup> *S.S.*, XLII, 60-61.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>97</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, II, 124.

<sup>98</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 143. Mätta Dyre also prophesies the decapitation of Heming Gad (*ibid.*, 155).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. for theory, pp. 4, 6-7, above.

comes to the surface in *Svenska folket* (1881). Here it is applied to Visby, when the greatness of this city is ascribed to its geographical location.<sup>100</sup> It is also made to account for the pietism of the decade beginning 1720, which is explained as the result of the miserable economic condition of a country ruined by Charles XII.<sup>101</sup> In the discussion of the persecution in Ål, Dalecarlia, in 1757, the author notes that the leader of the movement was a shoemaker. He adds that the members of this class have always been noted for their speculative and mystic trend of thought. The cause of this he lays to their sedentary habits.<sup>102</sup>

This doctrine does not, of course, harmonize with Strindberg's later historical ideas. We do, however, find what might be considered a mild echo of it in *Gustav Adolf*. Here the Swedish King in his conversation with Schwarzenberg motivates the difference in religion between Southern Germany and Sweden by the difference in economic conditions. "Your religion," he says, "is very beautiful, very appealing, and very expensive—suited to your rich countries. But for our poor country, a poor man's religion is more fitting. To you, wine; to us, ale: to us, homespun; to you, velvet."<sup>103</sup>

#### THE IMPERSONAL AND THE PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

In Strindberg's historical works, we find a shifting of emphasis with reference to the respective importance of the individual and the race. In the earlier works, the race might be called the all-important factor, while in those of a later date, relatively more importance is accorded to the individual.

<sup>100</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 127.

<sup>101</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 325.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>103</sup> *H.D.* II, 158.

In *Mäster Olof*, we have in general the emphasis on the race. It is true, early in the work the Storm and Stress character of the play seems to express itself now and then in an individualistic note. When Olof insists that one cannot reshape one's time, Gerdt answers that Luther did so. Again, when Olof says that he cannot go against the current, Gerdt suggests that we ought to guide it.<sup>104</sup> What we see here is, no doubt, merely the enthusiastic optimism of one who has not yet measured his powers with the world and hence does not realize the strength of the forces with which he has to contend. As the play progresses, the characters become more and more conscious of the strength of the mass. The limitation of the individual's influence on the people at large is felt by Lars, who insists on the inability of one single being to change the conviction of a whole people.<sup>105</sup> It is felt by Gerdt, as may be seen in his conversation with Olof after the discovery of the conspiracy. On the one hand, he recognizes that the conspirators cannot accomplish their purpose until the time is ripe; on the other hand, he sees in the conspiracy a much larger movement than appears on the surface. There are, he says, conspirators everywhere, altho they dare not come out openly.<sup>106</sup> This makes the leaders of the attempted revolution appear as the products of some of the political and social forces of the times, rather than as individuals independent of these.

*Gamla Stockholm* (1880-82) shows a decided interest in the mass rather than the individual. It deals largely with the people of the old capital. The rulers are touched on only incidentally, and then because of their relationships to the people.<sup>107</sup>

The conception of man as the product of his times appears clearly in *Svenska folket* (1881). In speaking of Mörk's

<sup>104</sup> *H.D.* I, 175.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. for examples, *S.S.*, VI, 21, 27.

*Adalriks och Giöthildas äfventyr*, our author lays down the principle that a literary phenomenon must be explained by its times just as a plant is explained by the kind of soil in which it grows. The writer, he says, is merely a collector and organizer of the ideas prevalent in his times.<sup>108</sup> Somewhat further on we find an attack on the immense importance attributed to the individual by the older school of historians. In a discussion of the sculptor Tessin, Strindberg characterizes the worship of genius as "the last remnant of heathendom, which it is the mission of our times to destroy."<sup>109</sup> He again supports the impersonal as against the personal interpretation in the section dealing with historiography. Here he attacks the dictum of the Holy Alliance, that "the welfare of the princes is the welfare of the people," and Geijer's slogan, "The rulers' history, the people's history." He also commends Fryxell, who, in contrast with Geijer, had given the history of the people parallel with that of the kings in his *Berättelser*. As an historian still more worthy of praise, he cites Hildebrand, who in *Sveriges medeltid* entirely omits the history of the kings and deals only with the country and its people.

"With this, new paths are opened for historical investigation, paths which will finally lead to the temple of truth, where one no longer expects to find a gallery of excellent personages, since the new edict that 'personality is the highest in history' has been annulled."<sup>110</sup>

The dependent relation of the individual to his times is again emphasized in the following passage of the same work. The subject treated is modern literature, and the question under discussion is Tegnér's position and influence.

Our time, which has arrived at the conclusion that *it is not the great men that make over the times, but that every new creation is the*

<sup>108</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 356-359.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 402-403.

*result of the cooperation of an entire generation*, our time is not concerned with investigating whether men have been great or small, and it does not judge according to fortune, but according to merit, if, indeed, it is concerned at all with judging; it tries to discover what influence the activity of men has had on the march of development, what good or evil.<sup>111</sup>

It should be noted that the last part of this quotation carries with it by implication the admission that the individual has some influence on his times, altho a limited one. Occasionally we find a fairly strong influence granted to the individual, as when the author tells us that Lars Hjerta exerted a very important influence on the political development of Sweden thru his *Aftonblad*, a daily which he edited from 1830 to 1851. This influence, Strindberg says, was so strong that even Hjerta's opponents admitted it.<sup>112</sup>

When we come to the later historical works, especially the plays, the individual hero or ruler plays a much more important part. Hedén remarks in 1900 that in the "royal dramas" of Strindberg, as well as in Geijer's history, "the history of the Swedish people is that of her kings," in spite of the dramatist's vehement attacks on this proposition.<sup>113</sup> It should be noted, however, that Strindberg in his later historical theory places more emphasis on the single individual as being often a man with an important mission.<sup>114</sup> It should also not be overlooked that Strindberg's royal characters, altho playing important parts, are controlled by circumstances. Gustav Vasa continually finds himself hemmed in by difficulties, and is almost forced to act as he does.<sup>115</sup> Gustav Adolf feels himself constantly led, or "dragged," as he says, he knows not where. Indeed,

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 408. Italics my own.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>113</sup> "Strindbergs Gustav Adolf," *Nordisk Tidskrift*, XIII, 560-561. Hedén's article was written before the appearance of Strindberg's later theoretical works, either historical or dramaturgical.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. above, pp. 51-52; 53; 76; 78-79.

<sup>115</sup> *H.D.* I, 357; 374.



Torstensson characterizes some of his actions as inevitable. Events shape themselves so as to make his course of action mapped out for him with practically no possibility for deviation.<sup>116</sup> In these plays, however, the compulsion has its source in an omnipotent Providence and not in an impersonal necessity. This interpretation corresponds to the change of Strindberg's historical theory from the materialistic philosophy of Buckle<sup>117</sup> to the mystic conception discussed in Chapter III. Furthermore, when testing Strindberg's historical theories by his plays, we must bear in mind that he did not consider these as primarily historical works. "Even in the historical drama," he says in an article written in 1909, "the purely human should occupy the main interest, and history merely furnish the background."<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> *H.D.* II, 61; 70; 83; 148.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. pp. 4; 6-7, above.

<sup>118</sup> "Det historiska dramat," *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 258.

## CHAPTER V

### PESSIMISTIC TENDENCIES

In the chapter on Strindberg's earlier conception of history we noted the pessimistic interpretation of life and history which he developed, partly thru the influence of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, partly experimentally and by independent thinking.<sup>1</sup> This pessimistic view is expressed, for one thing, in the conviction that a growing civilization is invariably attended by increased misery on the part of humanity. This conviction comes to view especially in *Svenska folket* (1881). Here the position of Visby when under the Hanseatic League is viewed unfavorably. Its supposedly flourishing state is referred to as that "unnatural condition of hoarded riches by the side of well concealed misery, which in the language of the merchant class is called prosperity."<sup>2</sup> The division of labor which accompanies civilization brings evil in its wake. The individual loses his independence. Cities arise, and the conflicting interests between city and country awaken hostility. The military caste develops as a special class. This causes oppression of city and country alike, and gives excessive power to the ruling class.<sup>3</sup> Again, the evils of factory life are attacked in a quotation from the political economist Agardh.<sup>4</sup>

This early pessimistic attitude manifests itself also in a failure to find any rational plan in human history. What the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 17-25, above.

<sup>2</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 327-329.

<sup>4</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 420-423. Karl Adolf Agardh (1785-1859), the Bishop of Karlstad, was a theologian, mathematician, natural scientist, and political economist.

author stresses in this connection is the alleged lack of causal relationship and the inordinately important rôle played by chance. This idea emerges especially in *Svenska folket*. The story of the Swedish people is the one work of Strindberg's historical writings which because of its character would lend itself to an analysis of cause and effect. But the one thing that characterizes this work is the absence of any causal interpretation on a larger scale. Nowhere in it do we find any such formula as, "The main causes of the downfall of such and such a power were the following," or "Among the results of the war of such and such a date, the following deserve to be mentioned as of special importance." There is, in fact, one chapter which illustrates two different tendencies on the part of the author; viz., the interest and belief in a gradual development referred to above,<sup>5</sup> and a disbelief in any rational causal connection between events. I refer to the chapter on "The King" in the section treating the Middle Ages. All change, the author says at the beginning of the chapter, is not development; and what succeeds in time is not always a result of what precedes. The office of king of Sweden, he goes on to say, was originally elective. The most efficient became ruler. Often the choice fell upon the sons of kings. This was a matter of chance, but out of this matter of chance arose the hereditary monarchy. This is clearly one instance of that lack of causal relationship and of rational development referred to by the author. The elective monarchy has in it no germ that could naturally be expected to develop into the hereditary monarchy. Strindberg also points out how the ceremony connected with the election of the king had as its basis an idea which in time was lost to view. The people would raise the king on a shield and hold him on their shoulders, and so indicate the origin of the royal power. This naturally carried with it by implication the right on the part

<sup>5</sup> Cf. pp. 93-95, above.

of the people to depose their king. After the introduction of Christianity, the choice of a king by twelve electors and his induction took place at the stones at Mora in Uppland.<sup>6</sup> In 1210, the historian tells us, the clergy instituted an ecclesiastical coronation. This was originally considered merely a beautiful ceremony. By degrees, however, it became evident that the Catholic Church had a different interpretation. Her representatives convinced the people that the ecclesiastical coronation was necessary, since the person of the king thus became sacred. The royal prerogatives, they contended, were derived, not from the people, but, thru the mediation of the priests, from God. Thus there arose, says our author, out of an indifferent ceremony, the doctrine of the divine right of kings.<sup>7</sup> We find here another case where Strindberg fails to see any rational development or reasonable causal relationship. "Thus," he says at the end of the chapter, "were derived some of those laws and statutes to which the ignorant ascribe a divine origin."<sup>8</sup>

The irrational element in history is more definitely stressed in this same work in the form of human inconsistency.<sup>9</sup> Thus the author calls our attention to the fact that a clergy educated and "enlightened"<sup>10</sup> enough to preach on the courses of the stars and to criticize adversely Matthew as an astronomer, or to discuss the question whether the Wise Men came from Persia or Arabia, or to speak of methods of dyeing yarn instead of preaching the word of God, were at the same time ignorant enough to take part in the persecution and burning of witches. Strindberg sees another inconsistency in the fact that, in spite

<sup>6</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 59-61.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. for the treatment in history of this theme in the later works, the section on the resolution of contraries.

<sup>10</sup> Quotation marks in Strindberg. The Swedish word used is "upplyst."

of the great indigence of the country, the people indulged extensively in luxuries. In fact, this tendency was so strong that the government found itself forced to pass one law after another to counteract it. In passing these laws, the author points out, the government also found itself involved in contradictions and had to permit violations of the very laws it had passed. For instance, when the country was flooded with foreign silks, domestic manufactories were supported for purely patriotic purposes. However, the later prohibition of the use of silks threatened this very industry which had been the object of the government's protection. Hence it was found necessary to disregard it and to allow the trade to go on.<sup>11</sup>

This pessimistic attitude toward human progress finds its reflection in other ideas which are reminiscent of Strindberg's earlier reading in evolutionary philosophy. In the earlier works, we see the attitude of Buckle, who refused to credit governments with any good influence. According to the dramatist's later interpretation of *Mäster Olof*, he sought in this work to attack the government in the person of the king.<sup>12</sup> Thus the Smålander complains that he has been ruined by the low price set on his oxen by the king; he has also lost his piece of property thru legal interference.<sup>13</sup> Olof is made to realize the futility of the king's office. He discovers that in serving the king he has served Belial instead of God.<sup>14</sup> The king gets the rewards and honors for the Reformation, but the real work is done by the reformers.<sup>15</sup>

In *Svenska folket*, written nine years later, the author generally, but not always, displays this same unfavorable attitude toward the government and the rulers. In one case he hurls

<sup>11</sup>*Svenska folket*, II, 334-335.

<sup>12</sup>S.S., XIX, 29.

<sup>13</sup>H.D. I, 185-186.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 242-243.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. *I röda rummet*, S.S., XIX, 29.

the accusation against them that after they have obtained absolute power, they never voluntarily relinquish it. After he has shown how the people expressed themselves at the time of Anscar, he adds that it took a thousand years before they were again to have the liberty of expressing themselves relative to their own affairs; for, as he says, "the powerful never give anything."<sup>16</sup> Even the rule of the Hanseatic League, which virtually constituted a government, he finds to have been bad.<sup>17</sup> Altho in speaking of the abolition of slavery, the historian grudgingly admits that the credit for it is due, "to be sure" ("verkligen"), to the Papal See; yet he adds that it was attributed to Earl Birger, "just as rulers generally receive the glory for all good that happens during their reign."<sup>18</sup> The wars of the Charleses and the Gustavs are characterized as unnecessary. Our attention is also called to the very unpatriotic attitude of Christina, who treated everything Swedish with unconcealed contempt.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the government or the king is sometimes commended for his work. Thus the war of liberation under Gustav Vasa is given as the one thing marking a new age in Sweden,<sup>20</sup> just as, earlier in the volume, Gustav's part in this is characterized as his immortal glory.<sup>21</sup> Again, after having referred to the uselessness of some of the kings, our author speaks of what he calls "the reign of Arvid Bernard Horn, one of Sweden's most excellent and most patriotic rulers, under whose guidance the country developed to a condition of prosperity."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 45-46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-128.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-144.

<sup>19</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 80.

<sup>20</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 333.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>22</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 187. Arvid Horn, who was a very important figure during the reign of Charles XII, was practically the all-powerful ruler during a part of the reign of Frederick of Hessen, 1720-1751. Horn died in 1742.



At times Strindberg assumes a similar attitude of pessimism with reference to the common people. In *Mäster Olof* (1872), we find something like Buckle's interpretation of the mob.<sup>23</sup> Here the people are represented as absolutely useless when it comes to the question of any forward movement. It is the "people" who throw stones at Olof.<sup>24</sup> Any reformatory movement, the Nobleman declares, must be carried on thru the intelligent part of the population.<sup>25</sup> This view is found also in the later plays, tho infrequently. Here it is, however, more likely due to Shakspearean influence.<sup>26</sup> The fickleness of the ignorant masses is forcefully portrayed in *Folkungasagan*. In Act IV, Scene I, the crowd cries out against the just and upright Magnus with one voice when Erik pronounces the fatal words, "Simon och Judæ dag. Minnens I den?" ("The day of Simon and Jude. Do you remember that?")<sup>27</sup> In the next scene, we learn that the minds of this same crowd, "changeable as weather and wind," have taken a new direction. They now interpret the pest as a punishment for those who have betrayed their king.<sup>28</sup>

In *Erik XIV*, the portrayal of the mob is very much the same. The crowd in the banquet hall one moment follows the lead of Måns Knekt and cheers the royal host. The next moment, when they learn that he is captured, they transfer their affection to Johan.<sup>29</sup> In *Gustav III*, a striking example of the

<sup>23</sup> Cf. for theory, p. 4, above.

<sup>24</sup> *H.D.* I, 209. Cf. also *S.S.*, XIX, 29.

<sup>25</sup> *H.D.* I, 219-220. Cf. also *S.S.*, XIX, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. for instance the fickle mob in *Julius Cæsar*, a play which interested Strindberg greatly, as is shown by *Öppna brev*, *S.S.*, L, 107-157 (article on *Julius Cæsar*); 237-240, etc. The interpretation in *Mäster Olof* cited above may also be due partly to the influence of the English dramatist. This play shows a very strong Shakspearean influence.

<sup>27</sup> *H.D.* I, 65.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 456-457.

ingratitude of the lower classes is called to our attention when the King reminds Anckarström of their unworthy treatment of him. "Lately," he says, "when you were facing death because of seditious talk, I gave you your life; but the crowd, whose cause you were pleading, spat on you and mistreated you in the public street."<sup>30</sup>

There is one doctrine connected with Strindberg's earlier pessimistic interpretation of life which, while not found in his earlier historical works, comes to expression in a definite way in two of the later plays. Reference has been made in the chapter on Strindberg's earlier conception of history to his remark that in a struggle it was not the man of moral superiority that gained the victory, but the barbarian.<sup>31</sup> It is this very idea that accounts for the downfall of King Magnus in *Folkungasagan*. From his studies in history, Strindberg had come to look on the last Folkung king as a good man who had learned to bear misfortune with submission and therefore was despised by a generation that was evil.<sup>32</sup> The portrayal of Magnus in the play is consistent with this interpretation, as is also the estimate expressed of him by other characters. Thus Erik, for instance, refers to the scandals centering around the court as the reward of his father, who is entirely too good, who can do no evil and therefore has to suffer evil.<sup>33</sup> Porse expresses a similar opinion. "He can do no evil, therefore he must die. That is the cruel law of life."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *H.D.* II, 416.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. pp. 22-23, above.

<sup>32</sup> *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 241.

<sup>33</sup> *H.D.* I, 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. Magnus's downfall is motivated in three ways. First, he is the atoning sacrifice, himself innocent, expiating the crimes of his family. Secondly, he is a man of excessive virtue in an evil generation. Thirdly, he is guilty of "hybris" (*ibid.*, 18; 19-20). This is a case of complex motivation. Cf. for Strindberg's theory on this, the introduction to *Fröken Julie* (1888) (*Romantiska dramer*, II, 75-76).

King Magnus of *Folkungasagan*, the Christian man who falls a victim to the free morals of the heathen, is resurrected in the person of Sten Sture in *Sista Riddaren*.<sup>35</sup> Sten Sture and his wife are referred to by Erik Abrahamsson as two children who walk in the midst of evil and deceit but understand nothing of it.<sup>36</sup> A little later the same character describes them as too good for this world.<sup>37</sup> Sten's excessive goodness appears, among other ways, in the fact that even after Gustav Trolle has three times shown his evil disposition, Sten spares his life, an act which he later has cause to regret.<sup>38</sup> It is finally this simplicity of character, this confidence in human nature, which makes Sten take the fatal step of sending King Christian the hostages whom by an act of perfidy the tyrant then carries away captive to Denmark.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Öppna brev, S.S., L*, 256.

<sup>36</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 52.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-115; 124 ff.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-141. It should be noted that the principle referred to here is no longer a conception of life which sees a lack of order in the universe. It fits into the Christian philosophy of Strindberg's later period.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RELATIVITY OF TRUTH

The theory of the relativity of truth plays a very important part in Strindberg's thinking in general,<sup>1</sup> and particularly in his historical works. In *Mäster Olof* (1872), it is, indeed, the chief theme; for here the author directly attacks the idea of absolute truth. The significance of this as a basic conception of the work is emphasized by Strindberg fourteen years later in his autobiographical account of the genesis of the drama. Truth is here represented, he says, as in eternal development; and this development must cease whenever anyone succeeds in convincing the masses that he has found the truth. Hence, he says, all useful truths are transitory ("övergående"). In accordance with this idea, no one is found to be wrong in the end, but each character is right from his own point of view. Even Brask, the champion of the old church, is treated with respect, as one who has been right but with the progress of time has come to be wrong.<sup>2</sup> Especially does this attitude appear in the verse edition in Brask's monolog, Act V, Scene 7, beginning,—

Fullbordat är det—I femtio år  
Orätt jag haft—och orätt jag får.<sup>3</sup>

The transitory character of all truth is stressed by Olof as against his mother, who holds strongly to the old faith. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for historical theory, pp. 13-16, above.

<sup>2</sup> S.S., XIX, 27-28. Hanna Rydh points out that Strindberg probably used Geijer as a source and that the latter has this sympathetic attitude toward Brask (*De historiska källorna till Strindbergs "Mäster Olof,"* 28; 56). Cf. for another case of a favorable attitude toward Brask on the part of Strindberg in 1890, *I havsbandet*, S.S., XXIV, 225-226.

<sup>3</sup> *Romantiska dramer*, I, 258.

latter contends that her son must be a prophet of lies, for surely she and her generation cannot have lived and died on a lie. To this argument, Olof replies that it was not then a lie, but has come to be one; the individual is unable to keep abreast of his times. When his mother was young, she was right; when he himself is old, he will perhaps be wrong.<sup>4</sup>

Connected with this idea is the fear of any standing still, a suspicion of any idea purporting to be definitive. In Act I, Gerdt warns Olof against giving the people "another pope" by exalting the Scriptures to a position of supremacy. "Do not bind the spirits," he says, "do not harken to the fatal cry 'Lo, all is well,' for then the millenium will not come."<sup>5</sup> Later in the play Olof is frightened when the idea of peace and finished accomplishment is brought to him. To have nothing more to do, is to him a dreadful thought. Freedom from struggle is the same as death.<sup>6</sup> In Act IV, he declares to Lars, "We are enemies then; I need new ones, for the old ones have gone."<sup>7</sup> But with the idea that no truth is fixed and that every system of faith is of necessity tentative and therefore subject to displacement by more advanced ideas, there is the corollary that these old systems also have a certain right. It would, indeed, as Lars points out in Act IV, be deplorable if a whole people could in a moment throw overboard the convictions which they have incorporated into their lives and which have been their help in sorrow and in joy.<sup>8</sup> Not the mere peaceful displacement of one thing by something better, but rather the continual conflict of the old and the new constitutes to Strindberg's mind historic development,—“the reciprocal activity of antagonistic forces” (“stridiga krafter inbördes växelverkan”), as he terms

<sup>4</sup> *H. D. I.*, 204.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

it thirty-one years later in "Världshistoriens mystik."<sup>9</sup> In the end, however, the new must conquer—just as the young plants in the spring push thru the old leaves that threaten to kill them.<sup>10</sup> Convinced of the eternal progress of ideas, Gerdt realizes that, far ahead of his own times as he is, a later generation will have progressed far beyond his position, and consider him a reactionary. "The time will come," he says, "when I shall be called a papist."<sup>11</sup>

One of the corollaries of the doctrine under discussion is that only those truths can benefit a people which it is prepared to accept, a proposition especially stressed by Buckle.<sup>12</sup> It is found in *Mäster Olof* in the ravings of the eccentric Gerdt, who says, "I am the rejected angel, who am to return ten thousand times, I am the liberator *who came too early*,<sup>13</sup> my name is Satan because I love you more than my own life, I have been called Luther, I have been called Huss, and now I am Anabaptista."<sup>14</sup>

A peculiar application of the doctrine of the relativity of truth is found in the ending of the play. Olof recognizes that he has gone too far, while, on the other hand, Gerdt is right in calling him an apostate.<sup>15</sup> According to Strindberg, the individual must of necessity become an apostate in the end, from weariness, from inability to develop any more, since the brain ceases to grow, etc., and those who expect the individual to go on eternally, are unreasonable.<sup>16</sup>

In *Svenska folket* (1881), the application of the theory appears mostly in an attempt at objective treatment and at dealing

<sup>9</sup> S.S., LIV, 396.

<sup>10</sup> H. D. I, 255.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Hist. of Civ.* I, 257; 272.

<sup>13</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>14</sup> H. D. I, 171.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 276, 279.

<sup>16</sup> S.S., XIX, 33-34.



with each side impartially. Thus in discussing the accusations which the Danes and Swedes hurled against each other during the struggle between Christian II and Gustav Vasa, Strindberg says it is difficult to tell on which side the truth lies, unless it lies midway between the two.<sup>17</sup> While insisting that the Swedes were honorable in their dealings with the Danes, he admits that the Danes, too, in their struggle acted in good faith and merely carried out their orders and that they were, in fact, relying on God for their victory.<sup>18</sup> In the discussion of monastic life, the author first quotes from a satirical work which shows no friendship for the clergy, and then, to offset the probably too severe criticism contained in this, he quotes from the diary of a bishop.<sup>19</sup> Finally, he draws some conclusions of his own, in which his attitude is partly favorable and partly unfavorable.<sup>20</sup> The theory that the manners of the Middle Ages were coarser than ours is rejected on the ground that manners and customs rest on convention or caprice.<sup>21</sup>

In the later historical plays and sketches, the theory finds its expression partly as a definite doctrine preached by the different characters; partly by the author's presentation of justice in a struggle as not entirely on either side, and thru his demonstration of the general futility of trying to find out exactly what is right; finally, by the portrayal of characters as being neither absolutely good nor absolutely bad.

In *Gustav Vasa* (1899),<sup>22</sup> the difficulty of finding absolute justice or a course that is the absolutely right one to pursue, is

<sup>17</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 170.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-III.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, III-II3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>22</sup> There may be a faint echo of the doctrine in *Folkungasagan*—a purely academic expression of it occurs in Act IV, where the Barber says, "Right too; everything is right, depends on how you take it" (*H. D.* I, 57.)

pointed out. We are not permitted to forget that in many situations a flat-footed definition of right and wrong is impossible. Thus Herman Israel sees justification for the disloyal attitude toward Gustav on the part of the Dalecarlians in the fact that they had once sworn fealty to Christian, who is, therefore, their legal king.<sup>23</sup> In answer to Gustav's question whether he has gone too far in his punishment of his opponents in Dalecarlia, Olof says that the question should rather be asked whether the others have any justice on their side. Then he points out that Dacke represents justified dissatisfaction; the Emperor is the guardian of the children of Christian II, who have a right to the throne of Sweden; for, he says, a revolt does not invalidate the law. Magnus Haraldsson, he continues, is the spokesman for the unjustly exiled bishops; for the law of Sweden does not exile anybody because of his faith.<sup>24</sup> Gustav finds in his relations with Måns Nilsson that it is impossible to unravel right and wrong. He takes the uttermost care to decide the case of the miner, asks advice and prays for guidance. He has Måns and Anders Persson executed only after due deliberation and a searching of his conscience; yet, when confronted by Måns's daughter and widow, Barbro and her mother, he feels as if he were standing before his judge.<sup>25</sup>

In the field of religion the theory of the relativity of truth finds expression in this play in the emphasis placed on progress as a necessary element in the religious world. Reginald is in despair because of his inability to find absolute truth. He sees his future as a gray mist thru which the sun is never to shine; and if a ray of light should ever penetrate it, he says, it will be found to be an *ignis fatuus* which leads people astray. Olof has had the same feeling. He, too, has realized the impossibility of arriving at absolute truth, but he has learned to accept this

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 343; 356-357.

fact with resignation. "I also felt that way once," he says to his son, "and at your age I saw as in a vision my whole terrible future. I foresaw the cup of sorrow ("kalken") and the stool of repentance, and still I had to proceed, had to go into the mist and myself bear the *ignis fatuus* which was to lead the wanderers astray."<sup>26</sup> With this insistence on progress, we find, however, a certain justification for the old.<sup>27</sup> For example, Måns Nilsson points out that Jon in Svärdsjö was a martyr who died rather than abandon the faith of his youth.<sup>28</sup> Incidentally, we note here that favorable attitude toward the Catholic religion which has already been discussed in Part I.<sup>29</sup>

In *Erik XIV*, the doctrine appears as a theory in the dialog between Erik and Göran in the third scene of the fourth act. Göran asks Erik if he has not as a rule felt himself a little better than the rest. They both agree that they always felt they did right. The natural thing to conclude, as Erik sees it, is that the others felt the same way about their actions. Who then, the question is, has been wrong? In the portrayal of character in this drama, the theory is Strindberg's guiding principle. No one is portrayed as absolutely good or absolutely bad. Göran, in spite of his lack of scruples when it comes to a question of getting rid of an inconvenient character, as for instance Max,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 362. The characters in the historical plays are constantly preaching Strindberg's historical doctrines, whether these doctrines are appropriate to them or not. It is of particular interest to note how the ardent reformers learn to look upon their own points of view as merely temporary and tentative opinions which must be abandoned in time for more advanced ideas. They become apostles of the doctrine of the relativity of truth. Cf. Hedén's "Strindbergs Gustav Adolf," *Nordisk Tidskrift*, XIII, 567.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. pp. 126-127, above.

<sup>28</sup> *H. D.* I, 286.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. pp. 74-75, above.

<sup>30</sup> *H. D.* I, 415.

shows himself a model of generosity in his relations with Agda and her child.<sup>31</sup> Erik, who appears in many ways as an unprincipled and selfish ruler, is called "the good king, the friend of the people," by Nils Gyllenstjerna a few minutes after the latter has resigned his position with the King.<sup>32</sup> The mixture of good and bad qualities in Nils Gyllenstjerna himself we shall note in another connection.<sup>33</sup>

*Gustav Adolf* (1900) may be said, like *Mäster Olof*, to incorporate the theory of the relativity of truth as its central theme. It was to be the "Nathan the Wise" of the Swedish author.<sup>34</sup> In it religious tolerance is preached in many ways, and especially thru the character development of the King. He starts out with absolute hatred of the Catholics, a hatred which he compares with that "perfect hatred" with which David hated "the unjust." He hates the Catholics, because, as he thinks, they are intolerant. When shaking hands with one of them, he feels as if he were touching a serpent. But this absolute certainty is considerably weakened when the Miller's Wife, the first person to welcome him in Germany, whose faith he characterizes as being as warm as her hand, proves to be a Catholic.<sup>35</sup> Still more surprised is the King upon learning that Wallenstein's Deputy ("guvernör") is a Protestant, that Wallenstein is tolerant toward all religions, that two of his generals are Protestants, and that half of his army is either heathen or Protestant.<sup>36</sup> He realizes the superiority of Wallenstein's broader outlook over his own narrow vision.<sup>37</sup> His change from a state of intolerance to one of tolerance appears also in

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 402; 452.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. pp. 164-165, below.

<sup>34</sup> *Öppna brev*, SS., L, 249.

<sup>35</sup> *H. D.* II, 36-38.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-56.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57.

his attitude toward the unnamed Jew who comes to present certain drafts. He orders that he be treated royally since there is, according to Paul, no difference between Jew and Greek, one Lord being over all.<sup>38</sup> Further on in the play, the Jew Marcus plays the part of the inspired interpreter of right and justice to the Protestant king, and succeeds in persuading him to return Magdeburg to Brandenburg,—something which Horn and Banér have been unable to do.<sup>39</sup> In his conversation with Frederick of the Palatinate, Gustav Adolf accuses him, a Calvinist, of having persecuted not only the Catholics but also Protestants of other denominations. As contrasts worthy of emulation, he cites Catholic emperors like Ferdinand I and Maximilian II.<sup>40</sup> Important in this connection is the proclamation issued by the King making it an offence punishable by death for a Protestant to disturb a Catholic in his public worship and the execution of this law in the case of the Schoolmaster.<sup>41</sup> The conviction is expressed in the play that the Catholics and the Protestants are one as bad as the other. The King makes particular mention of two Jesuits who thwarted the plot of two others and thus saved his life.<sup>42</sup>

Aside from religion, the relativity of truth finds expression in this play in that justice appears fairly evenly balanced between the King and his opponents. Even his right to the throne of Sweden is shown to be doubtful. We hear the contention on the part of Wallenstein's Deputy that Sigismund of Poland is the legitimate king of Sweden; when Gustav argues that his right rests on election, the Deputy replies that Sweden at that time was an hereditary monarchy.<sup>43</sup> More than this, Carl IX,

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84; 86. For the conviction arrived at by the King that different countries require different religions, see p. 112, above.

<sup>40</sup> *H. D.* II, 159.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 150; 155-156.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 13; 140.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

as Gustav himself recognizes, was a usurper; not because he deprived Sigismund of the throne, but because he ignored the claims of Johan, who was next in line of succession.<sup>44</sup> In view of these and other facts, inherited injustices appear to justify hostility against the King. Sparre's treason comes to appear not only pardonable, but laudable, since he has been merely true to his legal king, Sigismund of Poland.<sup>45</sup>

Not only does Gustav Adolf seem to be partly wrong in some of his political relationships, but his character also is shown as imperfect in various ways. The great indiscretion of his youth is discussed; his illegitimate son, Gustav Gustavsson, appears as a character in the play,<sup>46</sup> and the wreath contributed by him in the last scene further impresses on us the frailty of the great hero.<sup>47</sup> In his conduct of the war, the King is forced to enter into negotiations which seem of a doubtful character. He accepts money from his enemy Richelieu. This makes it impossible for him to fulfill the obligations which he has taken upon himself to defend his co-religionists and attack the Catholics.<sup>48</sup>

In *Engelbrekt* (1901), we find an insistence on the temporary and changing character of human opinions. Engelbrekt begins by being a staunch supporter of the Union,<sup>49</sup> and ends by leading a revolt against it.<sup>50</sup> In this part we see a variation of the theme of *Mäster Olof*, the necessity that the individual reformer become a renegade. During the time that he is a unionist, Engelbrekt takes a vow from his son never to revolt against the king. Thus when he later becomes a leader in the nationalistic uprising, he finds his own self rising up against him in the

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68; 180.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41; 113.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-71, etc.

<sup>49</sup> *H. D. I.*, 98.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 131 ff.



person of his son.<sup>51</sup> Again, we find emphasis on the doctrine that what is truth or right for one is not truth or right for another. When Gertrud leaves her home, she declares that Engelbrekt is right, but that she is not wrong.<sup>52</sup> Engelbrekt makes the same statement concerning himself and Karl.<sup>53</sup>

*Engelbrekt* is the last play that strongly stresses the doctrine of the relativity of truth. This doctrine is, however, touched on in some of the later plays,<sup>54</sup> among which is *Näktergalen i Wittenberg* (1903). Dr. Johannes, when asked whether God is with the Protestants or with the Catholics, answers that one who is just cannot be with either side, but must be impartial. When asked whether the papists have any right on their side, he replies that just as the secular world has an emperor, so the spiritual world must have its pope, and the spiritual must take precedence.<sup>55</sup> At the end of this play, the desire to develop a new truth—or new truths—already noted in *Mäster Olof*, finds expression thru Dr. Johannes, who leaves Luther to live in his own time, while he himself goes forward to the new unknown.<sup>56</sup>

In *Nya svenska öden* (*Hövdingaminnen*) (1906), the idea finds theoretical expression in "Sorgespelet på Örbyhus" where Erik arrives at the conclusion that everything is true and false at the same time.<sup>57</sup> It is seen at times as a guiding principle in the interpretation of character. In "Kungshamnsgisslan," Christian the Tyrant is pictured with an element of noble senti-

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>54</sup> The idea that all opinions are in time refuted is expressed in *Kristina* (*H. D.* II, 233); also the conviction that each one is saved by his belief (*ibid.*, 254).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 495.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 522.

<sup>57</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, II, 60. (II when used with this work indicates "andra samlingen." See Bibliography.)

ment relieving his generally repulsive character.<sup>58</sup> At the end of "Sorgespelet på Örbyhus" our attention is called to the fact that the character of Erik is interpreted differently by different people.<sup>59</sup> In *Sista Riddaren* (1908) a trace of this theory is also found. Christian, it appears, is the legal king of Sweden, hence Sture and his followers are rebels.<sup>60</sup> Again we note that the king, supposedly an inhuman tyrant, has "wept himself sick" after the death of Dyweke. This redeeming feature in the character of one villain is, however, offset by the seeming lack of any saving quality in another; for it is said, in the very same breath, of Gustav Trolle that it is impossible to find a single human quality in his make-up.<sup>61</sup> Similarly in *Riksföreståndaren* (1909), Brask is pictured rather as a good character and his allegiance to Christian is interpreted as loyalty to the one whom he considers his divinely appointed king.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 15.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 65.

<sup>60</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 98-99.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>62</sup> *Riksföreståndaren*, 84-85. Cf. with this, the interpretation of Brask in *Mäster Olof* as discussed on p. 125, above.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MONISTIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

#### SWEDEN AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EUROPE

One expression of Strindberg's monistic interpretation of history is the representation of Sweden as an integral part of Europe.<sup>1</sup> This is seen already in *Mäster Olof* (1872), where we note a stress on Sweden's relations with other countries. Particularly are the relations with Lübeck emphasized. We are reminded of the fact that this city aided Gustav Vasa's flight from Denmark and hence is credited with having given Sweden her king.<sup>2</sup> It has, in addition, a financial claim on Sweden thru its trade,<sup>3</sup> a claim which later gave rise to a haughty and even threatening attitude on the part of the Hanseatic city.<sup>4</sup> Sweden's dependence on the Papal See is suggested by Brask's reported negotiations with the Pope, which have for their object the introduction of the Inquisition into Sweden.<sup>5</sup> The presentation of the Swedish Reformation as a part of a larger European movement, suggests the place of Swedish history in the framework of universal history.<sup>6</sup> When Olof rings the church bell, Gerdt prophesies that the bells of Stockholm will answer, and that the blood of Huss and Ziska and the thousands of peasants will fall down on the princes and the papal partisans.<sup>7</sup> The relation of the Reformation in Sweden and Germany is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for theory, p. 39 ff., above.

<sup>2</sup> *H. D.* I, 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. for theory, pp. 51-54, above.

<sup>7</sup> *H. D.* I, 171.

kept in mind by constant references to Luther. The King and Brask discuss him in connection with the movement of unrest running thru Europe, and Gustav warns Brask not to carry matters to extremes, lest Sweden experience the same terrors as Germany.<sup>8</sup> The Swedish Reformation is, then, a part of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. But this, in turn, is an aspect of a general movement away from authority. This idea appears in a reference to French rationalism by the Nobleman, who has been educated in Paris. He tells of the liberal ideas of Francis I,<sup>9</sup> and adds another disintegrant movement in Europe,—this time an economic one,—a general decline of the feudal power. This he considers the cause of all the evils from which the different countries suffer.<sup>10</sup>

In connection with *Mäster Olof* we should mention also the vain attempts of the German to bring the subject of America into the arena of discussion,<sup>11</sup> altho the discovery of that country antedates the time of the drama's action by slightly more than a quarter of a century.

In *Gamla Stockholm* (1880-1882), we find particular stress laid on the dependence of Sweden on other countries. From the conversation between Herr Leonhard and his nephew in the first chapter, we learn that the Stockholm people in former

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 225. Such hypothetical parallels are used in Strindberg's later plays, particularly in introducing earlier history. They sometimes appear in the form of a threat or a warning.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 219-220.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-184. It may be remarked that this method of introducing into the dialog historical material which is more or less irrelevant to the play, is frequent in the later dramas. In its economy the device here also foreshadows Strindberg's later technic, which aims at producing historical atmosphere by a mere reference or mention of a name. In this case, however, it is probably not a conscious attempt in this direction. More likely, it is intended to be one of those introductions of irrelevant material which always give to literature a touch of realism.

days used green glasses brought over from Germany; in earlier times they used stone mugs manufactured in Germany and pewters made in England.<sup>12</sup> Herr Leonhard buys "honest English tobacco" from Virginia,<sup>13</sup> altho he offers a strong protest on behalf of domestic industry when he sees "Götha Leijon" coming in from sea with porcelain from China.<sup>14</sup> When eating dinner, they are surprised and delighted at the taste of a dish which is down on the menu card as "Tartuffler." It is unknown to the uncle, but the nephew, Carl Fredrik, offers the information that it is a West-Indian root imported to Alingsås by Alström.<sup>15</sup>

Children's games, including even the rimes used in the nursery, are shown to have foreign origins.<sup>16</sup> The diversion known as "Hoppa hage" existed in France as early as 1684 under the name of "La Merelle" or "La Marelle"; in England it is called "Scotch Hopping"; in Germany, where it was known before 1796, "Hoppen" or "Fuss-Scheibenspiel."<sup>17</sup> The game known as "kasta smörgås" was found even among the Greeks, who called it "epostrakismos"; the English name it "duck and drake"; the North Germans, "Butterbemmen werfen." It is found also, he says, in the Netherlands and in Switzerland.<sup>18</sup> The game called "spänna kyrka," we are told, is found among the French under the name of "hautes-coquilles"; among the English, as early as 1344, as "hot cockles."<sup>19</sup> To show the for-

<sup>12</sup> *S. S.*, VI, 18. We have here a method of introducing historical material frequently used later in the historical plays, namely that of having the characters indulge in historical digressions suggested by some article or person present, in this case, by the wine glasses.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-104.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

eign influence on recreation among adults, our author cites the Frenchman Fourreaux with his troop of horseback riders, who are said to have practiced their profession in and around Stockholm for several years beginning with 1825.<sup>20</sup>

Greater emphasis is laid, however, on this foreign influence in literature, and especially in the drama. The book contains a theatrical announcement which Herr Leonhard and his nephew read. The performance to be given is a comedy with a French name. Some of the actors have French names; some, German; and the play is to be performed by High German actors.<sup>21</sup> In the discussion of the popular shadow play *Den söndriga bron*, Strindberg calls attention to the fact that, altho the sisters Granberg are named as its authors in the bibliographies, it really goes back to a French play of 1776,<sup>22</sup> then to an author before Molière, and ultimately to a trouvère of the thirteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The puppet play *Der Tod und Kasper*, given by Kasper-Hänserman,<sup>24</sup> is compared with the Faust Puppenspiel which gave Goethe the idea of his tragedy. It is easy to believe "that our Kasper drew from the same source as Goethe."<sup>25</sup> In the field of non-dramatic literature the author points out that Regnér's *Begrepp* or *Första Begrepen af de nödigaste Vettenskaperne, till Tjenst för Swenska Barn*, as the entire title runs, received its impulse from the French Encyclopedists thru their desire to distribute knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Among translations read by young people in Stockholm he mentions Fénelon's *Télémaque*, Arnaud Berquin's *Barnavän*,<sup>27</sup> Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Samuel

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-93.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Hänserman's first visit to Stockholm took place in 1856 (*ibid.*, 81).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-89.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>27</sup> Swedish title given by Strindberg.



Richardson's *Charles Grandison* and finally, cheaply printed stories from the legendary world of Arabia.<sup>28</sup>

Personal relationships with other countries appear. Herr Leonhard tells his nephew the story of one of the Siberian captives, who went out to the war as a sergeant and was captured by the Russians at Dnieper. He then enlisted under the Czar and went against the Calmucks and was captured by these. He took service with them and led them in an expedition against China. He also taught the Mongolians to print with moveable type.<sup>29</sup> Another character whom the uncle discusses is Henric Brenner, who is distinguished by the fact that he spent the time from 1697 to 1721 partly in Russian captivity and partly at the Persian court as Swedish ambassador.<sup>30</sup> A brief history of the gypsies, supposedly of Hindu origin, is given as an example of foreign infiltration.<sup>31</sup>

In the field of linguistics attention is called to foreign influences on the language of Västergötland, which, according to Strindberg, is a mixture of home made dialect, gypsy words, Finnish words,—probably picked up in the Finnish forests,—Latin,—probably derived from the Walloons in Östergötland, Värmland, and Uppland,—and finally Italian.<sup>32</sup>

In *Svenska folket* (1881), the conception of Sweden as an integral part of Europe is seen particularly in the representation of the dependence of Sweden on other countries. In the introduction, the author points out that there is in Sweden very little that is native, and this is extremely difficult to find.<sup>33</sup> Many articles used in Sweden were imported from foreign countries, and others had a foreign origin.<sup>34</sup> An international

<sup>28</sup> S.S., VI, 118-129.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-178.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-181.

<sup>33</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 73, 132, 229, etc.

origin is attributed to the runes; and it is pointed out that the oldest specimens of sculpture, the rune-stones, which date back to the beginning of the period of Christianity, show influences of Italy, France, and Ireland. In no case, the author says, do they show any traces of an art peculiarly Scandinavian.<sup>35</sup> As a further proof of Swedish dependence, he cites the infiltration of foreigners. During the Middle Ages, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Russians, Spaniards, Greeks, and Germans lived in Visby under the protection of Lübeck and Hamburg.<sup>36</sup> During the period of union with Denmark, Sweden was filled with Danes, who came near turning the Swedes into a Danish race and making their manners and language Danish,<sup>37</sup> and in the reign of Albrecht, the Germans were equally numerous.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the author devotes one entire chapter to the subject of racial mixture. He shows the very large percentage of foreign blood in the present Swedish population, especially in the nobility and in the royalty. He also points out in this chapter the foreign element acquired by the conquest of Scania, Halland, and Bleking.<sup>39</sup>

That Sweden has influenced other countries is also stressed. The author states in the introduction that he wishes to show the rôle played by Sweden in the progress of world history, principally thru her many settlements in foreign countries.<sup>40</sup> Normandy appears as a country conquered and settled by the Vikings, some of whom were Swedish. Here as in many other places, the influence was reciprocal. As was to be expected, the Scandinavians were in time influenced by the people whom they

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>39</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 79-85.

<sup>40</sup> *Svenska folket*, I, 19-20.

were attacking.<sup>41</sup> Journeys to foreign countries also play a part, especially those of Brigitta,<sup>42</sup> and of the students who went first to the university of Paris and later to the universities in Germany.<sup>43</sup> A whole chapter is devoted to the Swedish emigrants of the seventeenth century and their work in foreign countries.<sup>44</sup> In particular we should note the very useful part attributed to the Swedish captives of Peter the Great. These served, we are told, as a civilizing influence in a country whose inhabitants were mostly ignorant.<sup>45</sup>

We now come to another group of writings including the later historical plays and *Nya svenska öden* (*Hövdingaminnen*). The idea of Swedish dependence persists thruout these works, but due to their character, the methods of representing it are different from those of *Gamla Stockholm* and *Svenska folket*. In connection with this we should note the existence at times of very loosely connected references in the historical plays. In these, Strindberg is often satisfied with reminding his audience that certain foreign countries and powers exist, without actually bringing them into the action proper of the play. When doing so, he is consciously endeavoring to create an atmosphere of world history. That this is his purpose, and that he attaches great importance to these cursory references, may be seen from his discussion of *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, where he motivates his introduction of the enumeration of the guests at the city banquet.<sup>46</sup> "As usual in my historical dramas, I have inserted Swedish history into the framework of universal history; therefore the jester's enumeration of the foreign guests and ambassadors is not unimportant and must not be omitted."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-191.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-196.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 196-199.

<sup>44</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 56-78.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 238-243.

<sup>46</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 257.

In *Folkungasagan*, we find Magnus involved in a net of foreign relationships. Prior to the action of the play, he liberated Finland from Russia and added it to Sweden. He bought Scania from Denmark.<sup>48</sup> To carry on his war against Russia, he borrowed money from the Pope; to redeem Scania, he pawned his crowns with Lübeck. He is in debt to Holstein; he left Brigitta's brother Israel as a hostage with that power.<sup>49</sup> In the play itself, two of these countries play their parts. The Russians recapture Nöteborg; the Danes invade Scania and Gotland and devastate Visby.<sup>50</sup> The Catholic Church is kept prominently before us almost thruout the play. The "Babylonian Captivity" is brought to our attention,<sup>51</sup> altho it has no direct bearing on the play; likewise Brigitta's unfavorable opinion of Pope Clement VI.<sup>52</sup> The Church constitutes a dramatic force at the end of the second act where Bishop Styrbjörn excommunicates Magnus.<sup>53</sup> Other foreign relationships are suggested by the fact that Algotson uses the French war cry "Mont Joie St. Denis" and that Porse wears the German colors,<sup>54</sup> also by the introduction in Act I of Russian war prisoners, who belong to several different nationalities.<sup>55</sup> Stress is placed on the fact that Queen Blanche is from Flanders,<sup>56</sup> and Erik's spouse Beatrix, from Brandenburg.<sup>57</sup> The Duke of Mecklenburg is accepted as king by the Lords<sup>58</sup> and at the end of the

<sup>48</sup> *H. D.* I, 15-16.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 49, 69.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 9; 33.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

play he appears before the city gates ready to enter as monarch.<sup>59</sup>

In *Gustav Vasa*, Sweden's relations with Lübeck play a leading part. They are made clear thru the scenes in and before the Hanseatic office and the introduction of its leader, Herman Israel, one of the councillors of Lübeck. In the first act, Herman accompanies Olof on a visit to Måns Nilsson.<sup>60</sup> Emphasis is laid on the fact that the Lübeckers aided Gustav in his escape from Danish captivity and helped him to win his final victory over Christian II.<sup>61</sup> An additional bond unites the Hanseatic League and Sweden, for both of these powers have thru the attainment of their political and ecclesiastical liberation drawn upon themselves the enmity of the Emperor and the Pope. In this fact, Herman sees a strong argument for an alliance between the Free Cities and Sweden.<sup>62</sup> Gustav, however, fails to recognize the cogency of this argument and finds himself in more unpleasant foreign entanglements. Herman, it appears, joins the Emperor, the Count Palatine, and the Duke of Mecklenburg; and all of these aid Dacke in his revolt against the Swedish King.<sup>63</sup> The relationships of the royal houses thru consanguinity and intermarriage are also drawn in for the purpose of giving an international atmosphere. Erik explains his unpatriotic sentiment and his German sympathies by the German blood which he has inherited from his mother.<sup>64</sup> Sometimes these international relationships are merely hypothetical, as when Erik's plan for marrying Queen Elizabeth is discussed. As a precedent for having a queen of English blood on the

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 290 ff.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 302, 333.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 312, 333.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 357, 364.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 309-310.

Swedish throne, the King cites the case of Queen Philippa, wife of Erik XIII and daughter of Henry IV of England.<sup>65</sup>

In *Erik XIV*, Erik's negotiations for the hand of Elizabeth offer good opportunities for bringing English history into the discussion. Max urges Karin to marry him and insists that this is her only means of safety in the event of Elizabeth's marriage to Erik. "Remember Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII," he says, "and now the daughter of this dog of a Turk is to be your queen. She will feel the mere fact of your existence as a constant insult, which she will contrive to blot out."<sup>66</sup> A little further on, Erik dreams of the six countries that will belong to him after his marriage to the English Queen.<sup>67</sup> This dream, however, is shattered by Elizabeth's refusal,<sup>68</sup> for which the audience is already prepared.<sup>69</sup> For the purpose of enlarging the international atmosphere still more, the playwright introduces Erik's various other marriage plans, and passes in review as candidates Mary of Scotland, Renatha of Lorraine, and Christina of Hessen.<sup>70</sup> Johan's marriage to Catherine of Poland serves as a dramatic motive and incidentally gives rise to speculations involving numerous foreign relationships.<sup>71</sup> Immediately following this comes the report that Johan has raised Finland and Poland against Sweden.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 323, 327. Cf. for Erik's other marriage plans, the discussion of *Erik XIV* below. Strindberg always has a definite purpose in making such cursory references as those to Erik's manifold marriage projects. Here, as in the case of references to earlier history, the naturalistic character of the dialog is of help. Cf. p. 105, footnote 63, above.

<sup>66</sup> *H. D. I*, 383.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 387-388.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 389, 417.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 417.



*Gustav Adolf*, as might be expected from the subject under treatment, teems with international relationships. Sweden and her King stand in the vortex of European war and diplomacy. Only a few examples can be cited here. The King's relations to German royal houses and his office as a German prince are used to show the invalidity of the term "stranger," which the Governor of Wolgast uses in referring to him.<sup>73</sup> Our attention is especially called to the fact that the Queen is "Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg."<sup>74</sup> The death of Sigismund of Poland suggests to the King his right to the Polish crown.<sup>75</sup> Gustav does not, however, stop at this. We find him dreaming of still other crowns.<sup>76</sup> The "procession motif" is used twice to give a world historic atmosphere.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the numerous nationalities represented by the wreaths in the last scene show the varied and international relationships of the King.<sup>78</sup>

In *Engelbrekt* the relationships with Denmark are naturally predominant, since the play deals with the hero's revolt against Danish sovereignty. Karl has served in the Danish army in the Holstein war.<sup>79</sup> The influence of French education in Sweden is suggested by the fact that Harald has a bachelor's degree from Paris.<sup>80</sup> The interpretation of a movement in Swedish history as a part of a larger movement or as paralleled by a similar movement outside of Sweden,<sup>81</sup> finds its expression in this play in two instances. Puke evidently connects the dissoluteness of the Swedish archbishop with the decline of

<sup>73</sup> *H. D.* II, 20.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 127, 133.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 196 ff.

<sup>79</sup> *H. D.* I, 94.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. for Strindberg's interpretation of parallel movements, pp. 51-54, above.

Rome.<sup>82</sup> In fact, the breakdown of the Church as an organization has already been reflected by the reference to the three popes who fight each other.<sup>83</sup> Harald tells the story of Joan of Arc, and we note that her part is similar to the one Engelbrekt is to play,—that of a leader in a national revolt against foreign oppression. Her end is, in a way, similar to his.<sup>84</sup>

In *Carl XII*, the war often points us to foreign countries. Our attention is turned, for instance, to the fact that the King has been in Saxony, Poland, Russia, and Turkey.<sup>85</sup> A plan is discussed to have the nephew of the King marry the Czar's daughter and thus get Russia, Poland, and Sweden under a single crown.<sup>86</sup> Carl Frederick of Holstein is spoken of as the successor to the Swedish throne.<sup>87</sup> Of particular interest as showing the idea of parallel action is the announcement of the death of Louis XIV,<sup>88</sup> which means, as Strindberg himself says, "the fall of despotism," and prepares us for the approaching death of the Swedish despot.<sup>89</sup>

In *Kristina*, the author creates an international atmosphere around the court by introducing the Spanish and English ambassadors and the French physician Bourdelot.<sup>90</sup> Christina emphasizes her foreign blood-relationships and gives them as reasons for her non-Swedish sympathies.<sup>91</sup> Whitelock's char-

<sup>82</sup> *H. D.* I, 115.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-107; 139. Strindberg interprets the murder of Engelbrekt, in part at least, as the revenge of one of the lords on Engelbrekt, who had incited the common people against the lords (*Svenska folket*, I, 329; *H. D.* I, 155).

<sup>85</sup> *H. D.* II, 280, 283.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

<sup>89</sup> *Öppna brev*, S. S., L, 252.

<sup>90</sup> *H. D.* II, 204 ff.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-269.

acter as regicide is referred to several times.<sup>92</sup> Thus the revolt against the royal power in England is suggested. This revolt echoes in a desire for liberty in Sweden when Christina says that there is a party that loves Cromwell better than Stuart.<sup>93</sup> In line with this parallelism, Christina is reminded, when she says, "Alles liebt mich," that Charles I said the very same thing.<sup>94</sup> Finally, the dramatist touches on the strained relations with Bremen, and thru the Free City with Holland and the Empire.<sup>95</sup>

In *Gustav III*, we get the impression of a tremendous French influence. The stage setting of the first scene includes a bust of Rousseau; the stage directions include the reading of a French paper by Anckarström.<sup>96</sup> In the second scene, we have a bust of Voltaire.<sup>97</sup> The King professes to be a disciple of Rousseau and of Voltaire in addition to being a friend of Washington and an admirer and emulator of Franklin.<sup>98</sup> The play teems with French loan words. The wars with Russia and Denmark echo here and there in the drama.<sup>99</sup> Sweden's movement for liberty takes its place as a part of a universal movement when we hear the announcement that the estates have been called together in Paris, and that Washington has been elected president of the United States.<sup>100</sup> This is interpreted by Liljensparre

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 204, 207, 217, 241, etc.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-214.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 349. By what means the audience is to recognize it as French is not explained.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 351, 372, 375, 388, 392.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 354. In this case, of course, the international outlook widens more than usual; instead of being interpreted as a part of Europe, Sweden is interpreted as a part of the world.

somewhat indefinitely as "the spirit of the times" ("tidsandan").<sup>101</sup>

In *Nya svenska öden* (1906), the author again lays stress on foreign influence. Thus it is pointed out in the story "Bjälbojarlen" that Rome had put her stamp on the North so that everything that we put under the heading of "Middle Ages" was only Roman, nothing else. In this connection, Sweden's character as a vassal of Rome and her dependence on the German-Roman Empire appear.<sup>102</sup> Intermarriages between the royal families are referred to when in the conversation between Dr. Laurentius and the stranger in "Karl Ulfsson och hans moder" we learn that Prince Erik is married to Beatrix of Brandenburg, that Beatrix's father is the son of Louis the Bavarian, and that her mother is the sister of Valdemar Seier of Denmark.<sup>103</sup> The foreign element in the Swedish army is noted in "Kunghamns-gisslan."<sup>104</sup> The Swedish opposition to Rome shows itself as a part of a more general movement thru Olaus Petri's reference to the Protestant Reformation in Germany.<sup>105</sup> In "Räfst- och rättarresan," the same idea is again suggested, and here the parallelism widens thru the introduction of the name of Erasmus.<sup>106</sup>

In *Sista Riddaren*, the city of Lübeck plays an important part. One of the vaults shown in the first scene belongs to the Hanseatic City.<sup>107</sup> The second scene of Act II is staged in the Hanseatic office; and Herman Israel and Cord König, Councillors, and Niklas Brems, Burgomaster of Lübeck, are characters in the play. In fact, Brems on behalf of the Papal See

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>102</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, I, 112.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 149-150.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 3-4.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 8-9.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 43.

<sup>107</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 9, 20.

offers the crown of Sweden to Sten Sture, a fact which also indicates Sweden's dependence on the Pope.<sup>108</sup> This dependence as well as the corruption of the Church is also stressed particularly thru the part of Gustav Trolle and the excommunication of Sten Sture.<sup>109</sup> Back of the action, we feel the threatening power of Denmark. That Prince Christian has become the brother-in-law of the Emperor suggests the latter's possible intervention in favor of Denmark.<sup>110</sup>

In general the same foreign relationships that are seen in *Sista Riddaren* may be found in *Riksföreståndaren*. In the latter drama, as in the former, one scene plays in the Hanseatic office and one scene shows us a vault belonging to the Free City.<sup>111</sup> Lübeck exercises an influence in making Gustav the king of Sweden.<sup>112</sup> The rôles of Denmark and the Papal See are more prominent than in *Sista Riddaren*. The play portrays a struggle between Gustav Vasa, representing the nationalistic party, and Christian II of Denmark, who also claims the throne of Sweden. In this struggle the Roman Church, personified by Bishop Brask, sides with Christian.<sup>113</sup> This gives to the conflict the partial appearance of a struggle between secular authority and the authority of Rome.

In *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, a universal background is suggested in several ways. The power of the Church is shown, for instance, by the celibacy motif,<sup>114</sup> and by the abolition of the office of Earl,

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-82.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, 91-94, 127. The activity of Luther is referred to (*ibid.*, 94), and the influence of his doctrines in Sweden is suggested by the mention of Olaus Petri (*ibid.*, 157), already discussed in another connection (see p. 109, above).

<sup>110</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 40.

<sup>111</sup> *Riksföreståndaren*, 91, 110.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-99.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>114</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 14, 123.

for which Magnus appeals to the authority of Clement IV.<sup>115</sup> This extraordinary power is motivated by the absence of any imperial authority. The reference to the imperial election calls our attention to the fact that the Empire is without a head.<sup>116</sup> The crusades are suggested by the mention of St. Louis and Richard the Lionhearted<sup>117</sup> and especially by the introduction of the Saracen.<sup>118</sup> Foreign relationships by marriage are brought into discussion several times to give an international atmosphere.<sup>119</sup> Finally, mention should be made of Hans's enumeration of the foreign representatives at the city banquet.<sup>120</sup>

### THE RECURRENCE OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

The theory of the recurrence of historical events, which is one of the corollaries of Strindberg's monistic interpretation of history,<sup>121</sup> finds frequent expression in his creative works. Parallels are drawn between events in earlier history, biblical or secular, and those occurring in the play or story. Thus we catch the idea of a cyclic movement of events. Altho the characters have changed, the present and the past are linked together by identity of motive and action.<sup>122</sup>

The parallelisms from secular history are by far the less numerous. One of these is found in *Erik XIV*, where Svante Sture speaks of the strife between Erik and Johan as a renewal of the "Folkung Game" ("Folkungalek"). In connection with

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 83. Cf. *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 258.

<sup>117</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 17, 40.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 116 ff. Cf. *Öppna brev*, S.S., L, 258.

<sup>119</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 25, 52, 90, 102.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. Cf. for discussion of this as a conscious device on the part of Strindberg, p. 142, above.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. for theory, pp. 54-55, above.

<sup>122</sup> The historical parallelism thus serves not only to convey a monistic interpretation of history but also, by the suggestion of earlier events, to impress upon the audience the continuity of history. It also exemplifies the theory that there are similarities everywhere. Cf. pp. 37-38, above.



this, he gives to the castle seen in the distance the name of Nyköping Castle. Nils Sture suggests that it is Håtuna and means by this that Johan and Carl are more likely to win in the struggle and that the ending will be a repetition of the event at Håtuna.<sup>123</sup> The same parallelism is used by Johan and Carl in the second scene of the last act, where Johan in discussing the invitation to Erik's wedding feast says that it makes him think of the Nyköping Banquet, and Carl suggests that it may be the Håtuna Game ("Håtunalek"), as it proves to be.<sup>124</sup> In *Gustav Adolf*, Clovis is referred to as the one that fought the Protestants of his day, who were called Arians. Thus the old Frankish king and the Arians appear as prototypes of the Catholics and the Protestants of the play.<sup>125</sup> In *Gustav III*, Cæsar's fate is twice held up as a warning to the King and his fortune recalled by Gustav himself as paralleling his own.<sup>126</sup> There is also in this play a suggested comparison between Gustav and Pechlin on the one hand and Augustus and Cinna on the other, when the King in addressing the General quotes in French a line from Corneille's *Cinna*, "Soyons amis, Cinna, c'est moi qui t'en convie," and Pechlin answers quoting another line from the same play, "Pour être plus qu'un roi, tu te crois quelque chose." The King then quotes, "Prends un siège, Cinna. . . ."<sup>127</sup> In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, the Rome of Luther's time is compared to that of Nero, Caligula, and Domitian. The same heathendom rules in the modern city, or a

<sup>123</sup> *H. D.* I, 420.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 445, 457. Cf. for historical details, p. 98, footnote 27, above.

<sup>125</sup> *H. D.* II, 93-94.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 412, 432.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 404. Cf. Corneille's *Cinna*, ll. 1701, 990, 1425. The first and third of these are spoken by Augustus. The second line is spoken by Emilie to Cinna, not by Cinna to the Emperor, as one would naturally infer from its use in the Swedish play. Perhaps Strindberg, who was often inaccurate, quoted from memory and by mistake attributed the second line to Cinna.

worse.<sup>128</sup> The story of Laocoön is kept before the audience; this suggests Luther's part in the Reformation, and a possible fatal outcome,<sup>129</sup> tho, as is often the case, the parallel holds only partly. In *Historiska miniatyrer*, we find the idea of a recurrence of historical events in "Hemicykeln i Athen," where Alcibiades is characterized as the traitor Ephialtes, who is to show the Persian King the way to Thermopylæ.<sup>130</sup> In "Domedagar" the approaching revolution in France is suggested as a parallel to that in England a hundred years before.<sup>131</sup> In *Nya svenska öden*, the idea comes forward quite definitely in "Vasarvet," where we have in colorful terms the suggestion that the Folkungasaga was repeated during the Vasa period, that the Nyköping Feast was served again at Gripsholm, and that the Håtuna Game was again played at Örbyhus.<sup>132</sup> In *Sista Riddaren*, Mätta Dyre denounces the treachery of the Swedes, some of whom have gone over to the Danish king, as merely another example of the practice of the Folkungs, who, whenever they entered into strife with each other, would incite the Norwegians and the Danes to take up arms against the Swedes.<sup>133</sup> In the same play we find the general theory which we have been discussing crystalized in the statement that "everything repeats itself."<sup>134</sup>

Particularly frequent in the historical plays is the alignment of some situation in modern history with a similar situation in biblical history. Strindberg's detailed knowledge of the Bible

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 480.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 457, 480, 506.

<sup>130</sup> *S. S.*, XLII, 39.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 317. There is in this collection also a parallelism between two events, both of which fall properly within the period of Bible history. In "Leontopolis" a parallel is drawn between Moses' rescue from the murderous intent of Pharaoh and Joseph's flight from Judea (*ibid.*, 95).

<sup>132</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, II, 78-79.

<sup>133</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 143.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

arms him with a rich store of motives and incidents. Several of these parallelisms are found in *Mäster Olof*. In this play, however, they are probably used to create a biblical atmosphere rather than to express any particular philosophy of history. Here as in the later historical dramas only a few examples will be selected from among the great number of such instances. When Lars urges Olof to undertake the "great work" of overthrow and reform, he reads to the young brother a passage from Jeremiah.<sup>135</sup> Gerdt urges the reformer on by saying, "Believe me, you shall be a Daniel."<sup>136</sup> As Olof is ready to go up to preach, he recites to himself a part of Jeremiah I, 17,— "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee."<sup>137</sup> In the confidence that he is watched over by God, Olof recalls the experience of Daniel in the lions' den.<sup>138</sup>

In the later historical plays, the use of biblical parallelisms constitutes a conscious attempt at suggesting a definite historical theory. Usually the event referred to in biblical history is one in which the hand of Divine Providence plainly manifests itself. The effect then is to give the impression not only of history repeating itself, but also of a divine power guiding the destinies of men.<sup>139</sup> In *Gustav Vasa*, the King suggests that if he has sinned like David, Olof should play the part of Nathan.<sup>140</sup> In *Gustav Adolf*, the King in giving up the possession of Spandau at the suggestion of Marcus, compares this act of self-surrender with Abraham's intended sacrifice of

<sup>135</sup> *H. D. I*, 164.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>139</sup> There are in the historical plays nearly eighty Bible references. In *Mäster Olof* there are 7; in *Gustav Adolf*, 22; in *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, 11; in *Sista Riddaren*, 11; in *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 8; in each of the other plays 5 or less.

<sup>140</sup> *H. D. I*, 365.

Isaac.<sup>141</sup> Later in the same play when the King saves the Printer's conscience by cutting the objectionable proclamation in two, this act is referred to as the judgment of Solomon,<sup>142</sup> and the experience of the Swedish armies is compared to that of the Children of Israel wandering thru the desert.<sup>143</sup> In *Engelbrekt*, we find again references to the escape from Egypt.<sup>144</sup> It is interesting to note that *Kristina* and *Gustav III* are practically free from such parallelisms. In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, however, they do appear, as for instance the comparison of Luther to Samuel.<sup>145</sup> *Sista Riddaren* has several Bible quotations. One of the most effective of these occurs where Heming Gad tells the story of the choice of David as king, applying it to Sten Sture. Just as he pronounces the last sentence, "It is this one," Sten Sture comes forward.<sup>146</sup> In *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, a biblical relationship is suggested when Birger addresses his youngest son Bengt as Benjamin.<sup>147</sup>

#### THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

Another expression of Strindberg's monistic philosophy is found in the conception of the fundamental unity of all religions. This conception is especially emphasized in *Gustav Adolf*, where the idea crosses the mental vision of one character after another. In the earlier part of Act II, the King learns with astonishment of the mixture of religious sects in Wallenstein's army, and of the tolerant attitude of the German general toward all religions. He realizes that the general has a larger

<sup>141</sup> *H. D.* II, 88. This is a favorite theme with Strindberg. Cf. for another instance, *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 138.

<sup>142</sup> *H. D.* II, 157.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 132, 198.

<sup>144</sup> *H. D.* I, 154.

<sup>145</sup> *H. D.* II, 458, 473.

<sup>146</sup> "Denne är det." *Sista Riddaren*, 29.

<sup>147</sup> *Bjälbo-Jarlen*, 72.

vision than he has. Wallenstein sees unity in the distance where he himself saw only division.<sup>148</sup> This unity is again stressed where Grubbe and Fabricius listen to the services of the Mohammedans and the Jews in "a church yard near the battlefield of Breitenfeld-Leipsic."<sup>149</sup> When Fabricius translates the prayers of the Mohammedans, Grubbe remarks in astonishment that their God is the God of the Christians. When the Jew Hrasan reads from the Thora, the King's secretary exclaims to the intolerant Court Preacher, "Why, that is the decalog according to Dr. Luther's catechism." No sooner has Fabricius replied that the Jews have only the law, but nothing about peace and blessing, than Hrasan begins to read passages from the Old Testament bearing on peace, including, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," etc., which is a part of the litany of the Lutheran service, and ending with, "God with us, Immanuel," which happens to be the watchword of the Swedish army for the day of battle.<sup>150</sup> Undoubtedly the best expression of this idea is found at the end of the play, where the motto on the wreath of the Electoral Prince of Saxony reads, "To the restorer of conscience. The colors are seven, but the light is one," and Fabricius exclaims, "The good Saxon hit it right, too. The seven colors of the rainbow out of one and the same light. That is a beautiful thought concerning the different religions."<sup>151</sup>

The conception of the essential unity of all religions recurs also in *Historiska miniatyrer*. In "Egyptiska tråldomen" Ruben explains to Amram that in the cult of the Egyptians the sacred animals are merely symbols and that back of them and the chief symbol, the sun, they worship the Only One, the Eternal One. Therefore, he argues, their God is the same as the God

<sup>148</sup> *H. D. II*, 57.

<sup>149</sup> Strindberg's expression in the stage directions (*ibid.*, 93).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-107.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

of the Israelites.<sup>152</sup> In "Apostata," we see how in Julian's mind the ideas of Christianity are practically identical with those of Socrates and Plato.<sup>153</sup> In "Dome-dagar," Christ, who was of Judah, is conceived as a connecting link uniting the Christians, Mohammedans, and Jews, and making them all partakers of the promise given to Abraham.<sup>154</sup>

#### THE TREND OF HISTORY IN TERMS OF INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION

It has been noted in Part I that Strindberg conceived historical movement as being, in the last analysis, integration or disintegration. Integration is the term used to define the constructive process; disintegration, that of dissolution.<sup>155</sup> This idea is expressed several times in the historical plays.

In *Folkungasagan*, the unifying, constructive interpretation of the historical process appears in Erik's praise of his father. Among the claims to gratitude which he advances on behalf of Magnus are that he united Finland and Scania to Sweden and that he has unified the varying laws of the kingdom.<sup>156</sup> In *Gustav Vasa*, Olof characterizes the King's mission as that of gathering Swedish men and countries into one.<sup>157</sup>

Our attention is called, in *Gustav Adolf*, to the fact that France and Germany—the West Franks and the East Franks—were originally one. On this basis Banér explains the alliance between Henry II and Maurice of Saxony against Charles V, and the appropriation of Lorraine with Metz, Toul, and Verdun by the French. As a movement of disintegration, however, Banér notes the division of the Frankish kingdom at Verdun

<sup>152</sup> S. S., XLII, 10.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. pp. 60-62, above.

<sup>156</sup> H. D. I, 17-18.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.



into France and Germany. He also calls attention to Spain's ambition for expansion after the conquest of America. All of these facts are cited by the Swedish general to show the wisdom of Gustav's alliance with France, in which the officer sees a development on the part of his master from a provincial general into a world statesman.<sup>158</sup> A little further on Banér explains Gustav Adolf's ambition for the annexation of the Baltic provinces and also his desire to have a unified North Germany to oppose to Southern Imperial Germany.<sup>159</sup>

In *Engelbrekt*, the idea of integration as the constructive side of historic activity is stressed when Puke urges the Swedish leader to stand by the revolutionists and aid them because he alone can gather, anybody can tear to pieces.<sup>160</sup> In *Carl XII*, Görtz is seen dreaming about a combination of Russia, Sweden, and Poland, under one crown.<sup>161</sup> In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, the Schoolmaster points out that with the ascension of Maximilian to the throne Germany will gather to itself Burgundy, the Netherlands, and possibly Spain.<sup>162</sup> In *Historiska miniaturer*, the idea is seen in "Redskapet," where Vincent recognizes the fact that Louis XI has gathered eleven provinces into one and has made the people of Gaul into one people,<sup>163</sup> and also in "De sju goda åren," where Frederick the Great prides himself on having created a unified Prussia out of a number of scattered and unrelated districts.<sup>164</sup> In *Nya svenska öden*, the idea appears in "Kungshamns-gisslan," where Heming Gad declares that the Kalmar Union enabled the Scandinavian countries to take their place among the other European na-

<sup>158</sup> *H. D.* II, 122-123.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>160</sup> *H. D.* I, 130.

<sup>161</sup> *H. D.* II, 295.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>163</sup> *S. S.*, XLII, 244.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

tions.<sup>165</sup> Sten Sture is urged in *Sista Riddaren* to accept the crown on the plea that this will stop disintegration in Scandinavia.<sup>166</sup>

This idea is applied to the field of religion. The process of dissolution is well illustrated in *Gustav Vasa*, where a good picture is given of the confusion and dissension brought about by the Protestant Reformation. There have been disputes for a generation, Erik says, and all the prophets are pulling each other's hair. Luther has refuted Augustine; Calvin, Luther; Zwingli in turn has refuted Calvin; and, finally, John of Leyden has refuted them all.<sup>167</sup> The dissension caused by the Reformation is described by Olof's wife Christina in the statement that there are twenty-five different doctrines instead of one common church.<sup>168</sup> The religious disharmony of the day is incarnated in his son Reginald. Originally an adherent of Luther, he found that the latter's doctrine of justification by faith does not hold, for his faith does not make his works better. So he gave up Luther, and now he does not know whom to follow. In fact, the complexity of his religious ideas is so great that Johan considers him a Catholic, and Erik, a Zwinglian.<sup>169</sup> He feels an urge not toward anything constructive, but rather toward something destructive. He wishes to go to Wittenberg to "tear down Luther"; and when he learns that Luther is dead, he wishes to tear down the universe and then himself.<sup>170</sup> Olof, too, is sensitive to this disharmony. Grieved at the many creeds represented in the circle known to Reginald, he cries out, "I thought the times of dissension were past,"<sup>171</sup>

<sup>165</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, II, 19.

<sup>166</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 81.

<sup>167</sup> *H. D.* I, 321.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

and later in speaking to the King about the death of Luther, he says, "May the times of dissension be past now."<sup>172</sup> The Queen's mother personifies the spirit of religious dissension. She causes constant embarrassment by her insistent adherence to the Roman faith and her pro-Catholic influence on Johan,<sup>173</sup> whose Catholic leanings, together with the Calvinistic tendency of Erik, add greatly to the sorrow of the King.<sup>174</sup> The Queen herself appears to be torn between the old and the new; she dares not pray the old prayers and she does not know the new ones.<sup>175</sup>

Intolerant sectarianism appears as a form of religious disintegration in *Gustav Adolf*. The Electoral Prince of Brandenburg refuses to consider himself a co-religionist of Gustav's and insists on the difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran faith.<sup>176</sup> This division among the Protestants is again stressed when Schwarzenberg insists that he is going to remain a Catholic until he finds one single and unified Protestant faith which he likes better.<sup>177</sup> Integration appears in form of religious tolerance in the case of the Miller and his wife, who live peacefully and respect each other's faith,<sup>178</sup> and in the case of Wallenstein, who is tolerant toward all religions.<sup>179</sup> The dream of a single unified church is expressed by the Electoral Prince of Saxony.<sup>180</sup>

In *Historiska miniatyrer*, we find the principle of integration in religion in the story of "Apostata," where Julian attempts to unite heathendom, Christianity, and Judaism.<sup>181</sup> Again in

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 339-340; 342, 375.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>176</sup> *H. D.* II, 73. Cf. for other examples, *ibid.*, 94-95.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. Cf. also pp. 155-156, above.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105.

<sup>181</sup> *S. S.*, XLII, 133-134.

"Tjänarnas tjänare," Gregory I is credited with unifying the Christian Church by causing the Arians to give up their sectarian peculiarities and unite with the other Christians.<sup>182</sup> Gregory VII embodies the principle of integration when he gathers all Christian states under one spiritual head; while Henry IV of Germany, who opposes him, is termed a spirit of disintegration on the ground that he works only for Germany.<sup>183</sup>

*Nya svenska öden* exemplifies the conception of the Church of Rome as a unifying element, binding together the various European nations. In the story "Bjälbo-jarlen" the Swedish Archbishop declares that the Archbishop of Rome has brought to realization the dream of a world power which the Roman Emperors dreamed. Now all are "Cives Romani."<sup>184</sup> This union of all nations under Rome is given in the same story as the factor which brought Sweden out of her obscurity.<sup>185</sup> A desire to effect a union of all the different churches, including the Roman and the Greek, is the ambition of Johan III in "Apostata."<sup>186</sup> Disintegration is at work when Duke Carl (later Carl IX), in trying to have the Catholics exiled, caused Calvinists and Zwinglians also to be driven from the country, thus making Sweden "narrowly and positively Lutheran," while before it had been "generally Protestant" ("generellt protestantiskt").<sup>187</sup>

In connection with Strindberg's interpretation of historical activity in terms of integration and disintegration, we should note his stress on the latter process and his resolution of it into doubt, negation, negative procedure.<sup>188</sup> This is particularly

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-203.

<sup>184</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, I, 117. Cf. also for this idea, *ibid.*, II, 33.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 132.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 68. Cf. also *ibid.*, II, 74-75.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 77-78.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. for theory, pp. 5, 16, 62, above.

evident in *Mäster Olof*. When in the early part of Act I, Olof complains that the people are calling for water, living water, but nobody can give it to them, Lars tells him, changing the figure, to tear down the old worm-eaten house, for the Lord will build a new one. Then Olof objects that they will be without a roof over their heads for a while. "Yes," Lars answers, "but they will at least get fresh air." Olof is staggered at the thought of robbing an entire people of their faith and driving them to despair, but Lars rejoins, "They must despair." Olof, he says, is born for offense; the Lord will do the healing.<sup>189</sup> In Act IV, we find the attitude of the brothers reversed. Lars complains that Olof is continually tearing down, but when asked what he has to offer in the place of what he has torn down, he is without an answer. To this Olof replies, "Do you believe that anyone can give away a faith? Has Luther given anything new? No, he has only torn down the screens that obscured the light. The new that I want is doubt in the old, not because it is old, but because it is decayed."<sup>190</sup> In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, Luther's father accuses him of having dissolved all bonds and torn down the old. The Reformer pleads guilty to this accusation with pride, since by dissolving the bonds he has become free, and by tearing down the old he has become young.<sup>191</sup> In *Historiska miniatyrer* we find the same idea expressed in "Alkibiades," where Socrates shows that the greatness of Protagoras lay in the fact that he taught the Athenians to doubt; for, as he says, "doubt is the beginning of wisdom."<sup>192</sup>

#### THE RESOLUTION OF CONTRARIES

We noted in connection with the chapter on pessimistic tendencies the idea of human inconsistency emerging in *Sven-*

<sup>189</sup> *H. D.* I, 165.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>191</sup> *H. D.* II, 513-514.

<sup>192</sup> *S. S.*, XLII, 66.

*ska folket*. We noted that Strindberg feels this to be a particular expression of that irrationality which he at that time sees in history.<sup>193</sup> However, the author's interest in inconsistency and contradictions is not restricted to his earlier period. Throughout his life, he continues to see anomalies and inconsistencies in history. There is, however, a change in the basis on which this general conception rests. In his later period (after 1892) it is no longer conditioned by the pessimistic philosophy which fails to find a plan in the universe. Now this planlessness is interpreted by the author as something merely apparent which in reality resolves itself into an harmonious relationship. In his theoretical works he is interested in the resolution of apparent contradictions;<sup>194</sup> in his plays or stories he presents these contradictions themselves, generally without any attempt at resolving them.<sup>195</sup> As a rule they appear in the form of human inconsistency. This forms an important element in *Gustav Vasa*. Here it appears in the first act when Magister Stig points out that Christian killed off the lords but let the people go, while Gustav lets the lords go and enslaves the people. Anders Persson draws the conclusion that the Swedish people conducted the war of liberation *against* their liberators. To illustrate further the inconsistency and confusion existing during this period, Ingel Hansson remarks that the first man in Dalecarlia who took up arms against the Danes was himself a Dane, and that the first man he killed was a Swede.<sup>196</sup> This lack of reason, this inconsistency in human action makes such a strong impression on Erik that he considers life "one

<sup>193</sup> Cf. pp. 117-119, above.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. pp. 62-63, above.

<sup>195</sup> The fact that in each case we have to look for the resolution outside of the play or story makes us feel that we are seeing a section of life and adds to that largeness of vision which Strindberg aims to impart to his historical dramas.

<sup>196</sup> *H. D. I*, 289.



single insane asylum." As an illustration of this want of logic, he cites his own father, who, altho a model of common sense, does such absurd things. He liberates the country from the foreigners and then himself brings foreigners into the country and puts some of them, like Peutinger and Norman, above the lords and authorities of the land; he delivers the church from human inventions and then on pain of death forces on her new inventions.<sup>197</sup>

This idea of apparent irrationality in life is again expressed by Erik in the drama bearing his name—*Erik XIV*. Here he notes, when relating his experiences at the trial of his brothers, that if he had had them sentenced in the regular way, they would have been unable to escape punishment. However, he wished to be generous, and as a result they were freed. A bridge watchman was not allowed to testify against a nobleman; but if his testimony was in favor of the nobles, it was accepted; and a lackey's testimony was given preference over that of the King.<sup>198</sup> Erik also notes in Act IV, Scene 3 that he has done right, and still he begs forgiveness.<sup>199</sup> He returns to this idea a little later in the same scene, where he complains that he always has to beg forgiveness when some one else has done wrong.<sup>200</sup> To Erik's question whether life is more worthy of laughter than of tears, Göran answers, "Probably both in the same degree." This, however, he adds in the vein of Strindberg's later mysticism, does not exclude the possibility that it may have a hidden meaning.<sup>201</sup> The incongruity between an act and its consequences is remarked on by Erik a minute later. He has had the traitors executed, he pays an indemnity for their lives, and his enemies use this indemnity to buy his head with.<sup>202</sup> This

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 430-431.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 446.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 449.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 453.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.

general inconsistency in the order of things is also seen in the character of Nils Gyllenstjerna, as interpreted by Erik, who considers him "not the best and not the worst . . . full of fairmindedness and injustice, brave as few and cowardly as none, faithful as a dog and false as a cat."<sup>203</sup> It is worthy of notice in this play that the irrationality of things is seen and commented on by Erik and Göran, the least rational characters in the play. We do see, however, in their outlook on life some of Strindberg's own ideas. In connection with the character of Nils Gyllenstjerna, it is also of interest to note Strindberg's idea in 1908 of the complexity and inconsistency of human character. Speaking of Shakspeare's *Hamlet*, he says, "Shakspeare depicts men in all their aspects, just as inconsistent, self-contradictory, disintegrated, and disintegrating themselves ("söndriga och sig söndrande"), conflicting, incomprehensible, as children of men really are. But not always does he do this, and not completely, for that one cannot do."<sup>204</sup>

The idea of the apparent inconsistency and irrationality of life is more prominent in *Gustav Adolf* than in any of the other later historical plays. Already at the beginning of the play, the Governor of Wolgast expresses the opinion that everything is incomprehensible in this war, where no one can distinguish friend from foe.<sup>205</sup> A somewhat similar feeling is expressed by the Cooper, who remarks that the city of Stettin has defended itself honorably against the imperial forces for some time, and now when it opens its gates to the liberator, he plunders and burns.<sup>206</sup> The King finds himself involved in a number of contradictions. He is obliged to take up arms against his co-religionists, whom he came to defend, a fact which leads Horn to remark that life's contradictions are not

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>204</sup> *Öppna brev*, S. S., L, 82.

<sup>205</sup> *H. D.* II, 18.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48.

solved by us mortals.<sup>207</sup> A little further on, Gustav Adolf asks in bewilderment where the friend is and where the enemy.<sup>208</sup> He does, however, arrive at a partial understanding, at least, of himself, and his relationships. Toward the end of Act IV, he says that he has worked himself out of the insoluble contradictions in which he was involved at the beginning of the war. He has found himself and his mission, which was not to aid the Protestants against the Catholics, but to aid the oppressed against the oppressor.<sup>209</sup> It was not Strindberg's intention, however, to resolve completely these contradictions in *Gustav Adolf*. He says in his comment on the work that the King entangles himself in insoluble difficulties—namely as a dramatic character—when it is a question of distinguishing friend from foe, and that only death on the battlefield can cut the threads.<sup>210</sup>

In *Engelbrekt*, it is pointed out that Margaret, who was called by the Swedes to drive away the Germans, was the very one who effected the election of Erik of Pommerania as king, and yet the Swedish nation is celebrating her day in commemoration of the expulsion of the Germans.<sup>211</sup>

In *Carl XII*, Horn calls attention to the fact that the King, who has spent eighteen years trying to fulfill a vow to destroy Peter of Russia and August of Poland, is suing one day for the friendship of Russia, another, for that of Poland. Furthermore, Horn says, Carl wanted to raise a strong Poland against Russia, but instead dissolved Poland and worked in favor of Russia.<sup>212</sup> In the same play, the King rolls together into a ball

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>210</sup> *Öppna brev*, S. S., L, 249-250.

<sup>211</sup> *H. D.* I, 102.

<sup>212</sup> *H. D.* II, 339. The idea of a man desiring to accomplish a certain thing while actually accomplishing another, also suggests the idea of man working for his own ends while in reality furthering the purposes of God. Cf. pp. 78-80, above.

certain letters which he has received and accompanies this action with the remark, "All life is like this ball, a web of lies, mistakes, misunderstandings."<sup>213</sup>

Several examples of the theory under discussion are found in *Gustav III*. Horn and Holmberg read passages from Gustav's proclamation commending the freedom of the press. Holmberg then reminds Horn that the author of this document, in strange inconsistency with his theory, condemned Halldin to death for attacks on the manufacture and use of brandy, and Holmberg himself to a fortnight of prison life on bread and water for having printed the attacks.<sup>214</sup> The inconsistency in the character of the King is touched on again by Anckarström, who insists on the impossibility of unraveling the plans of the King. He appears as the man of the people and of liberty, puts down the lords with the aid of the other estates, but makes himself "the dictator of all four estates."<sup>215</sup> A more general application of the idea of inconsistency appears in the statement made by De Geer that the knights and the nobles defend liberty, while the lower estates defend tyranny.<sup>216</sup>

In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, our attention is called to the inconsistency of the Electoral Prince of Saxony, who gathers his relics with one hand and pats the heretics with the other.<sup>217</sup> In *Historiska miniatyrer*, human inconsistency appears in "Den store." Here Peter the Great is characterized as "the barbarian who civilized Russia, who built cities but would not live in them, who subdued his wife and gave full freedom to woman."<sup>218</sup>

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 341. "Hela livet är som denna boll, en väv av lögnar, misstag, missförstånd."

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 351. Halldin was, however, pardoned; Holmberg, not.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 398-399. The four estates were "adel, präster, borgare, bönder:" nobles, clergy, burghers, peasants.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 453.

<sup>218</sup> *S. S.*, XLII, 292.

Again, in "De sju goda åren," Frederick the Great in his letter to Voltaire calls the monarchs in Europe leaders in the revolutionary movements. "We despots," he says, "who forced enlightenment on the people, we were the demagogues, and the people rewarded us with ingratitude."<sup>219</sup>

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE IDEA OF PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

The first suggestion of a belief in a world plan is found in *Svenska folket* (1881). This is surprising in view of Strindberg's opinions at this time as expressed in his other works, and the general lack of causal relationship and the occasional stress on the irrational element in history which we find in *Svenska folket* itself. It should be noted, however, that here a conscious Divine power is not necessarily implied. In discussing the work of Rudbeck, Strindberg says that to regard the activity of this author as expressed in his *Atlantica*<sup>2</sup> as wasted or as evidence of insanity, would be to deny the existence of a world plan. Rudbeck's comparative studies, he continues, pointed to a common origin of the Scandinavians and the other Aryan races and shook the belief in something specifically Scandinavian which differed from the rest of what is Germanic.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of a Divine Providence guiding the destinies of men and of nations finds definite expression in the later historical plays and sketches. Its implication thru the use of biblical parallelisms which serve also to give expression to the idea of the recurrence of historical events has already been discussed.<sup>4</sup>

This idea has a prominent part in *Folkungasagan*. It is interesting in this connection to note Strindberg's own comment in the seventh number of *Varia* for 1899, where the last act of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for theory, Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> This work attempted to prove that Sweden was the cradle of the human race and the country in which the original Paradise was located.

<sup>3</sup> *Svenska folket*, II, 171.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 154, above.



the play was printed before the appearance of the entire play in book form. This act was preceded by a synopsis of the first four acts, as yet unpublished. At the end of the synopsis the dramatist says that "the king . . . is about to be formally deposed and his ambitious enemies are on the point of gathering the harvest, when in the fifth act the plans of all are crossed and the guiding hand of the Invisible One intervenes to untie the knots according to His own mind without caring about the little disappointments of mortals."<sup>5</sup> This conception is seen thruout the drama. The characters go along each on his own path, plotting and planning, each trying to carry out his own selfish design, each proving in the end to be an unconscious tool in the hand of Providence.<sup>6</sup> Something of a conscious mission is fulfilled by Bishop Styrbjörn, who, however, knows only a part of his mission. He considers himself a scourge in the hand of God, one to whom has been committed the task of rooting out the Folkungs from the earth. What is to happen afterward, or who is to be the king, he does not know.<sup>7</sup> The one thing for which he is not prepared is the entrance of the Duke of Mecklenburg. When he hears of this, he realizes that he and the others who opposed King Magnus were able, to be sure, to evoke the storm, but not to guide it, and that while they decided one thing, He who guides the fates of men decided something else.<sup>8</sup> In a larger sense, the idea of the expiation of a series of crimes by the last ruling member of the Folkung line, which has already been touched on in another connection,<sup>9</sup> carries with it the recognition of a Providence ruling the world on the basis of certain moral principles. The idea of an external

<sup>5</sup> S. S., XXXI, "Anmärkningar," 401-402.

<sup>6</sup> This principle is expressed as an historical theory four years later in "Världshistoriens mystik." Cf. pp. 78-80, above.

<sup>7</sup> *H. D.* I, 36.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 98, above.

Divine Will governing events is strengthened by the reference made to it by characters of the play. For instance, Magnus makes the assertion that the Folkungs, in spite of their many crimes, have been a mighty instrument in the hands of Providence for organizing Sweden, making laws, and Christianizing the country. "God uses unclean tools sometimes,"<sup>10</sup> he says, "Why? That we are not allowed to know." We find here a note appearing more frequently in the later dramas, namely the profundity of God's plan which man is not allowed to fathom. We find another instance of this in the same play. Magnus asks whether God, who apparently cannot himself forgive, expects us to forgive, thus placing greater demands on us than on himself. "You have of late," Brigitta replies, "taken it into your head to ask questions which may not be asked." "Because they cannot be answered," Magnus replies. "No," Brigitta rejoins, "because they must not be asked, still less answered."<sup>11</sup>

This idea of the intervention of Providence is seen in strong relief in *Gustav Vasa*. Gustav's life is portrayed as having been especially watched over by God. Måns Nilsson calls it a miracle and relates how God led Gustav out of prison in Jutland and then guided him thru many trials and dangers until he finally freed Sweden from the yoke of Christian.<sup>12</sup> Jakob Israel feels that God is with the Swedish king. He expresses this sentiment to Erik and to his own father, whom he warns against entering into strife with Gustav.<sup>13</sup> Olof feels himself to be a tool, altho an insignificant one, in the hands of God. His particular mission, as he sees it, is to serve "God's great miracle man," whose task was to unite Swedish men and lands

<sup>10</sup> God's impartiality in the choice of instruments is given as an historical theory four years later in "Världshistoriens mystik." Cf. pp. 84-85, above.

<sup>11</sup> *H. D. I*, 32. Cf. for historical theory, pp. 78-80, above.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 308, 312.

into a unit.<sup>14</sup> But he feels that God's hand is on the other side also; for when asked the very next minute who Dacke is, he answers, "Perhaps a God's miracle man in his way,"<sup>15</sup> thus expressing the idea that God is on both sides and that He is impartial in the choice of tools. The absolute inability of man to accomplish anything of his own will, and the omnipotence of Providence, are expressed by Göran Persson. All our plans and calculations, he says, are doomed to disappointment: the gods play with us; at times we act wisely, then all things go wrong; at other times, what we do is absolutely wrong, and then all things go right.<sup>16</sup>

In *Erik XIV*, the rule of Providence is suggested sometimes with definiteness, sometimes merely as a possibility. We note a recognition on the part of Göran that external powers control human destiny. He admonishes Erik not to fear the Stures, since "Fate or whatever it is called" has elected the Vasas.<sup>17</sup> At the end of Act III, Göran feels these external powers much more forcibly. He is at a loss how to interpret events. All he can see is that things happen without his or Erik's ability to hinder. All that he can do himself is to wait and wonder what is to happen.<sup>18</sup> There is in this attitude something also of a realization of the mystery of existence. This realization becomes stronger as the play approaches its end. Near the middle of the last scene, Erik asks Göran what he is pondering "Your fate and mine," answers Göran, "but I understand nothing any more. I believe, however, that our tale is drawing

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 349. This also suggests the theory that "everything contains its opposite." Cf. p. 64, above. This idea is suggested in *Kristina* (*H. D.* II, 260), *Gustav III* (*H. D.* II, 419), *Sista Riddaren* (p. 142). Cf. also p. 176, below.

<sup>17</sup> *H. D.* I, 396.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

toward a close.”<sup>19</sup> A few minutes later he reiterates that he knows nothing. “I dreamed once,” he says, “that I was a statesman; and I thought I had a mission to defend your crown, which you inherited from your great father and which was given by the people—not by the lords—and worn by the grace of God! But I must have been mistaken.” To this Erik replies, giving expression to an idea to which we have already called attention,<sup>20</sup> “Have you ever noticed, Göran, that there are things which we do not understand?” The mysticism of existence is expressed also in Göran’s utterance that even tho life seen’s a great piece of nonsense, this does not prevent it from having a hidden meaning.<sup>21</sup>

In *Gustav Adolf* strong emphasis is placed on the idea of Providential guidance and direction of human affairs. Especially do we find the theory developed that man, while pursuing his own ends, really serves the purposes of God. Already in the second scene of Act II, the King feels that some one is dragging him where he does not want to go.<sup>22</sup> Horn, in discussing the alliance with Richelieu and its complications, gives utterance to his conviction that it was unavoidable and also that events are leading to a goal undetermined and unknown as far as human reason is concerned. Thus the King, while he attempts to do one thing, in reality does another.<sup>23</sup> After the destruction of Magdeburg by fire, Horn again declares that “The Lord of Hosts” has taken hold of the King and is leading him where he does not want to go.<sup>24</sup> Gustav Adolf himself comes to realize fully the complete subordination of his own plans to those of God and the guidance of God thruout his own

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. p. 171, above.

<sup>21</sup> *H. D. I*, 453.

<sup>22</sup> *H. D. II*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

blind groping. When in Act IV, Scene 3, Horn asks forgiveness for not always having understood his plans, the King answers, "My plans, my purposes, which were not mine, and which I only now begin to understand, just as I understand that I have been merely a blind subordinate under the Highest, whose plans we are never allowed to fathom."<sup>25</sup> The idea that God rules and limits the human will and that His ways cannot always be known, in fact that man is not allowed to investigate them, is also suggested by Marcus's reply to Gustav's question as to why he does not believe in the Redeemer. "Perhaps," he says, "because I am not allowed to. I take care not to try to find out."<sup>26</sup> Strindberg's doctrine that God has chosen the northern hemisphere particularly for carrying out his plans<sup>27</sup> is put into the mouth of the Miller's Wife, who supports the theory of the Providential mission of the Swedish King with the biblical statement that "God's spirit rests in the North."<sup>28</sup> The idea of God's impartiality is formulated by Marcus, who, when told by the King that he speaks like a Catholic, answers that he is not partial to the Catholics, and that God does not seem to love one child above another. A minute later, Marcus, when the King is surprised at the moral truths which he hears from this Jew, appeals to the fact that all men have one father and that one God created them.<sup>29</sup> A belief in the constant rule of God and the inability of man to fathom His plans, is expressed at the beginning of Act V by the Sergeant-Major. The Quartermaster complains that Wallenstein, whom he considers as godless, is irresistible, while the pious Tilly was literally hammered to death by degrees. "Who," he asks, "is the God of Hosts to-day?" "The same," the Sergeant-Major answers, "as yester-

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. for theory, p. 77, above.

<sup>28</sup> *H. D.* II, 12. Cf. *Zech.* VI, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *H. D.* II, 86.

day and at the dawn of the centuries, whose plans neither you nor I can fathom."<sup>30</sup>

In *Engelbrekt*, we find an insistence on the fact that God has called the hero to deliver Sweden from foreign tyranny. When the situation seems critical, Styrbjörn says that it all rests with Engelbrekt because "Providence has given into his hands the fate of Sweden."<sup>31</sup> A little further on, he makes an appeal to Engelbrekt to heed the call; for he is called, Styrbjörn insists, just as Jonah was.<sup>32</sup> Finally, when Engelbrekt has effected the liberation from the foreign yoke, the Bishop contends that God has led the Swedish people out of Egypt thru the instrumentality of Engelbrekt.<sup>33</sup>

In *Carl XII*, Horn expresses the idea that the King was once the man of Providence, and that success followed him as long as he wandered in the paths of righteousness, but that ever since he started going his own ways, Providence played blind man's buff with him.<sup>34</sup> At the end of the play, Swedenborg arouses a feeling of mysticism when he says that perhaps man is not allowed to understand the fate of the King. He has never, he says, understood the fate of any human being, not even his own. He also interprets the bullet which ended the King's life as coming "from above," pointing toward heaven.<sup>35</sup> There is in this play also the suggestion of the idea that after a country has played her part in world history, her reason for existence has ceased. Poland, Görtz asserts, which was formerly a bul-

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>31</sup> *H. D.* I, 129.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>34</sup> *H. D.* II, 339.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.



wark against the uncivilized Russia, is no longer needed since Russia has become civilized.<sup>36</sup>

In *Näktergalen i Wittenberg*, we find the doctrine that everything serves and that evil serves good.<sup>37</sup> This is the idea of the Wanderer when he says that the Dominican, tho a servant of lies, is to serve truth; that tho a servant of Antichrist, he is to effect his downfall; that tho a deceiver and oppressor, he is to bring the people liberty.<sup>38</sup> The idea of a Conscious Will governing and directing the will of man, unconscious of his goal, is expressed by Dr. Johannes when he says that men go their own paths but do the errands of others, that the ways they wander do not lead where they think they do, that "He, who is, has been, and shall be, smiles at men, but uses them."<sup>39</sup> The success of Luther is adduced by the same character as a proof of the fact that the German reformer has God on his side.<sup>40</sup> The power and wisdom of an all-governing Providence is acknowledged by Luther toward the end of the play. Upon hearing of the progress made in Germany during his confinement, he cries out, "God rules! God rules, and we are only Hans Wursts and Polichinelles," and again, "God is great and gracious, and I am a simpleton."<sup>41</sup>

In *Historiska miniatyrer*, the conception of a Divine Providence constitutes the basic idea. In fact, the purpose of the

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 296. This idea is found also in *Gustav Adolf* where the assertion is made that Poland has been made superfluous by a powerful Brandenburg (*ibid.*, 137). Cf. for theory, p. 84, above.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. for theory, pp. 80-81, above.

<sup>38</sup> *H. D.* II, 444-445. This general idea is expressed as a theory and a part of a general monistic formula by the same character. When asked by "the Voice" what was in the beginning, he answers, "Everything. Everything is everything and in everything" (*ibid.*, 494).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 497.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 520.

stories, as Strindberg says two years later in *En blå bok*, was to find God's plan in history.<sup>42</sup> It may be said in general that the idea of a guiding and governing Providence pervades the book even when not directly formulated. A few definite expressions of it may be cited. In "Egyptiska trädomen," Amram calls attention to the guiding care of God, who will not allow the Nile to rise more than fifteen yards, and so prevents the destruction of the people.<sup>43</sup> In "Apostata," Maximus shows Julian by the coincidence of events that there must be a superior will that guides everything. As one example of this he cites the fact that Jerusalem was conquered by Pompey 63 B.C. and that the same number of years after Christ, Pompeii, the city named for the conqueror, was destroyed.<sup>44</sup>

In connection with the theory of a Divine Providence guiding the destinies of men, we find the idea that God uses men and nations to further His own purposes.<sup>45</sup> The theory that man pursues his own goal but in reality serves the purposes of God is illustrated in "Redskapet," which shows by the very title that the hero, Louis XI, is considered as a "tool." Near the end of his life, Louis is told by Vincent, the monk, that altho his purposes were not pure, his work is not to be destroyed, for "He who guides the destinies of men and nations uses everything and everybody for His own purposes."<sup>46</sup> The idea is again found in "De sju goda åren," where Frederick the Great says in his letter to Voltaire, "We, sir, have not been angels, but God has used us for great things. Is it a matter of indifference to Him whom he chooses?"<sup>47</sup> In "Dome-dagar" the prophecy is uttered that Napoleon, in spite of his extreme

<sup>42</sup> S. S., XLVI, 404. Cf. p. 88, above.

<sup>43</sup> S. S., XLII, 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. pp. 78-83, above.

<sup>46</sup> S. S., XLII, 243.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

selfishness, his vices, and his crimes, is to serve humanity,—“for everything serves.”<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, we find the theory expressed that each nation has her mission. As in the theoretical works and in the historical plays, so here the mission of Russia is represented as being that of a bulwark of Europe against Asia.<sup>49</sup> The corollary that when a country has served her purpose in the world she disappears from the arena of world history, appears in “Ismael.” When Count Julius exclaims, “My beautiful Spain has come to an end, then,” Eleazar answers that nothing ends, it merely changes after it has had its time. Spain, he says, had her time when she supplied Rome with emperors, scholars, and poets, but that time is past.<sup>50</sup> The idea that Poland no longer serves a purpose in world history, is set forth by Frederick the Great.<sup>51</sup>

In *Nya svenska öden*, the idea of a guiding Providence is never forcibly put forward. It may be felt, however, in the conception of a definite plan which at times shines thru Strindberg's narrative. This conception shows itself particularly in the theory that each country has her part to play. This theory is expressed in “Apostata,” where Strindberg says that in the time of Johan III, Sweden and Poland together constituted a bulwark against Russia.<sup>52</sup>

We find the idea also that man as a tool of God pursues his own plans, but in reality carries out the purposes of his Creator, which are often diametrically opposed to his own. In the story of “Bjälbo-jarlen,” Bishop Kol says to Birger, “You, a heathen, have Christianized Sweden and her old laws.”<sup>53</sup> In “Kungshamns-gisslan,” the author asserts that Christian the Tyrant's

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-174.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>52</sup> *Nya svenska öden*, II, 75.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 145.

destruction of the superfluous lords and bishops helped Gustav Vasa in his work for the welfare of the country.<sup>54</sup>

In *Sista Riddaren*, Gustav Eriksson shows how God has shaped events so as to insure the victory of the patriotic Sture party.<sup>55</sup> Heming Gad's suggestion that God has chosen Sture as He chose David of old, has already been discussed in another connection.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Sista Riddaren*, 25-26.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. p. 155, above.



## CONCLUSION





## CONCLUSION

Strindberg's life may be divided into two periods, with *Himmelrikets nycklar* (1892) as the line of division. This play seems to foreshadow, altho faintly, his later religious ideas. We may regard the first or materialistic period as extending from 1870 to 1892, and the second or mystic period from 1892 to the end of his life. This division is a convenient one for the study of his historical theories, which were profoundly affected by the change in his religious ideas.

The earlier period of Strindberg's life was influenced by Buckle, Darwin, and Spencer. Buckle considered the physical rather than the spiritual or moral as the basic factor in history. He exalted the pursuit of exact knowledge and depreciated moral systems and metaphysical speculations. He looked on human history as something subject to rigid laws like any of the sciences, and hence adopted a deterministic interpretation of life and denied the freedom of the human will. He had a generally pessimistic view of the society of his day. He refused to credit the governments and rulers with any good influence, and held an equally pessimistic opinion of the unenlightened masses. Strindberg not only subscribed to these ideas but also applied Darwin's theory of gradual development, which he had accepted in 1877, to history in 1881 in his analysis of Sweden's past in *Svenska folket*. Moreover, Spencer's emphasis on the race rather than on the individual, his interpretation of truth as relative, and his stress on negative procedure,—all these are found in Strindberg's theories of this period.

This evolutionary outlook on life was modified by the pessimistic attitude which was in the main represented by Schopenhauer and Hartmann, with whom he was well acquainted in 1874. His reading in Hartmann as well as his own reflections,

based on experience and observation, caused him to doubt the evolutionists' doctrine of progress toward something better. He agreed with Schopenhauer in denying to history any organic development or plan.

Strindberg's monistic conception of history has its germ in the earlier period but comes into full development in the later period. In the earlier period the ideas proclaimed did not constitute a definite monistic system. They were expressions of practical political considerations, rather than of theoretical speculations. They were usually connected with an anti-nationalistic tendency, which at times developed into a positively internationalistic spirit. Even Spencer's impersonal interpretation, which saw in the race rather than in the individual the most important factor in history, received an anti-nationalistic coloring with Strindberg. It was connected with a decrying of the rampant hero-worship which constituted a part of the patriotism of the older historians. The theory of Sweden as an integral part of Europe began at least as a decidedly anti-nationalistic doctrine. It was only in the second period that his historical ideas shaped themselves into a conscious monistic system. He was at work on a system of historic theory in 1893 and 1894; no doubt it was this system that was completely developed in 1903 in "*Världshistoriens mystik*." The impersonal theory is basic in this work, altho never expressed. The conception of Sweden as an integral part of Europe appears in a generalized form. Strindberg's historical monism in its final form includes the following ideas: the impersonal interpretation of history; the interdependence of different countries on one another; the transference of political, social, and religious institutions from one country to another; the unification of smaller countries into larger empires and monarchies, and in modern times into larger democratic federations; the unification of peoples thru the mixture of races; the recurrence of histori-

cal events; the reduction of all historic activity into disintegration and integration; the unification of religious beliefs; synchronous movements, both physical and spiritual, in different parts of the world; the movement toward unity in the resolution of apparent contradictions; the interpretation of the course of history as a part of nature's order. The last four of these were expressed for the first time in "Världshistoriens mystik."

The later period is most radically distinguished from the earlier one by a belief in a Divine Providence. Complete theoretical expression of this is found in "Världshistoriens mystik" (1903). The Conscious Will is working out a definite plan in world history, making use of mortals who are often ignorant of the purposes they are serving, who often accomplish the very opposite of what they intend, who retain a certain amount of their individual liberty and at the same time act as blind tools of Providence. Everything has its place, everything serves, error often serves truth. God is seen, in this study, as the impartial leader, equally favorable toward all nations and all religions. By 1906, He is seen as the God of the Christians, leading the forces of Christianity on to victory. In general, the goal of the Conscious Will is unification.

Strindberg's later historical ideas, while apparently showing an entire change of front, are, in many cases, the natural outgrowth of the older ones. The development of the monistic conception from a few scattered principles in the earlier period to a well defined system in the later, has already been discussed. The determinism of the earlier theory, which considered man the product of circumstances, without free will, has its counterpart in the later theory which makes him the unconscious performer of tasks outlined by a Providence standing outside and above him. In each case a certain importance is granted to the individual: in the earlier conception, the single being is admitted to have some historic significance; in the later, the

author sees in the progress of world history, in addition to the restraint and compulsion exercised by the Great Leader, a certain amount of room for the play of the human will. In each case, the greater part, at least, of the responsibility is shifted from the shoulders of the individual; in one case, to a kind of impersonal and inevitable necessity; in the other to God. Buckle's theory that man is subject to the same laws as other organic beings, placed history in the domain of natural law. This tendency is more fully developed in Strindberg's later attempts to parallel certain processes in history with processes in the natural sciences. The emphasis on the race rather than on the individual, found in the earlier period, runs thru the second also. It is true, the individual often appears here as an important agent, nevertheless the large purposes of history are interpreted in terms of race or of humanity at large. In fact, the chief purpose of historical development is unity. The Darwinian idea of continued development, tho no longer set forth as a doctrine, constitutes a basic conception of the later period. Emphasis on negation is seen thruout the two periods. In the earlier, stress is laid on Buckle's theory that doubt is the beginning of wisdom, and on Spencer's theory that all reformatory activity should proceed negatively. In the later period, there is stress on disintegration and an insistence on its usefulness as a process in historic development.

The irrationality of life which Strindberg sees in his earlier years and which leads to a pessimistic interpretation of life and to atheism, finds its counterpart in the "historic antinomies" of the later period. The main difference between the two is that in later years there is an assumption that the irrationality of life is only apparent, and that back of it is logic and rationality, altho we, with our limited vision, are unable to see it. Thruout Strindberg's entire literary life we note a desire to find "order in the great disorder." In the first period this desire

is abandoned in despair; in the second, it is pursued with hopefulness and, at least to some extent, with satisfaction.

The theory of the relativity of truth so strongly emphasized in the earlier years runs thru the later also, where it is seen particularly in the conception of the relative validity of all religions and the impartiality of God.

In Strindberg's historical studies, his historical doctrine is closely allied with his scientific theories in general and his philosophy of life. As has been suggested already, his earlier conception is conditioned by the scientific theories centering around the doctrine of evolution. The idea of gradual development in history is merely the application to this study of the central idea of the evolutionists. Likewise the view of the race rather than the individual as a unit, is a conception inseparable from evolutionary philosophy. The pessimistic view of life which develops in Strindberg partly under the influence of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, makes him see in the universe as a whole a lack of order and purpose. Just as he fails to see any plan or purpose in history, so he sees in the development of plant and animal life and in creation as a whole nothing but chance and caprice. To Strindberg, at this time, there is no such thing as a progress toward something better, either in human history or in creation in general. The classification of rocks and the interpretation of human history as orderly and well planned development, are alike fanciful notions of the brain, which likes to arrange things in order.

The monistic conception which comes forward with particular force in the second period is merely a special application of a general philosophic system. In fact, Strindberg's monistic theory permeates all of his thinking. Nevertheless, his monistic ideas of the earlier period are practically restricted to the field of history. Probably as early as 1893 or 1894, Strindberg attempted to formulate a definite system of historic monism,



which took final form in 1903 in "Världshistoriens mystik." The earliest published works containing indications of such a system are in the field of science. He wishes to do away with distinctions in various fields. Everywhere he seeks principles of unity. His monism develops from a scientific to a philosophical system. Under the influence of St. Pierre and Swedenborg, he looks for similarities everywhere, even in widely different fields. His historical monism is linked with his scientific ideas particularly thru his attempts to establish analogies between history and the natural sciences.

The mystic interpretation of history as planned and carried forward by a Conscious Will is paralleled in Strindberg's own religious experience. The entire universe is at this time pervaded by a note of mysticism.

In general, it may be said that Strindberg's conception of history as expressed in his theoretical writings is mirrored rather faithfully in his historical or semi-historical works. *Mäster Olof*, *Gamla Stockholm*, and *Svenska folket*, which belong to the earlier period, often show a difference in the relative stress laid on certain conceptions. This is due sometimes to the fact that they represent different stages in Strindberg's development, sometimes to the difference in genre and subject matter of the works themselves. Buckle's insistence on the material basis of things influences the interpretation of events in *Svenska folket*, while no appreciable trace of it is found in *Mäster Olof* and *Gamla Stockholm*. The idea of gradual and continued development receives some emphasis in *Mäster Olof*, is seen now and then in *Gamla Stockholm*, and is strongly stressed in *Svenska folket*. The continuity of history is found in a limited degree in *Mäster Olof*, while it plays a negligible part, if any, in the two other works. The theory of the relativity of truth is a particularly strong element in the play, where it is connected with an insistent demand for progress and an emphasis

on doubt, on negation, on the negative process of tearing down as an essential element in all forward development. It also comes to view in *Svenska folket*, where it is seen partly as a principle which guides the author in his interpretation of events, and partly as a theory. Thru all of these works, we find that interpretation of history which emphasizes the race rather than the individual,—an interpretation which bears within it the germ of monism. In addition to this, we find running thru the three works of this period a more distinctly monistic conception, that of Sweden as an integral part of Europe. This is a fairly definite element in *Mäster Olof*, and becomes prominent in *Gamla Stockholm* and *Svenska folket*. In the first named of these works, incident to this conception is the suggestion of parallel synchronous movements which are treated in theory thirty-one years later in "Världshistoriens mystik." It is possible, of course, that the author was not at this time conscious of the definitely monistic character of this idea. We find in this period a note of pessimism. The philosophy of Schopenhauer is seen in the view of history as mere change without any definite plan or causal relationship which permeates *Svenska folket*. Hartmann's idea that the progress of civilization never adds to man's happiness but instead brings misery in its wake, is definitely expressed in this work. Buckle's conception of the unenlightened masses as useless in carrying out any program of reform is a prominent idea in *Mäster Olof*, while his pessimistic view of government influences the interpretation of events in that play as well as in *Svenska folket*.

Seventeen years elapsed between the writing of *Svenska folket* and that of *Folkungasagan*, the two works which, so far as non-critical historical writing goes, mark respectively the end of the earlier and the beginning of the later period. As has been indicated in the discussion of the theoretical works, several of Strindberg's ideas remained the same; yet his out-

look on life had changed greatly during this interval, and some of his conceptions had become different. The shifting in his attitude toward the individual, who in the earlier works is granted very little power, is an example of this change. In the later works, some of the kings and heroes play rather important rôles. They are, as a rule, carrying out the designs of a Higher Power, a Conscious Will, which uses individuals as tools. However, even in the later plays the individual hero is restricted by circumstances and his actions are controlled by Providence. The great interest shown in the kings and heroes of the later plays is partly due to Strindberg's theory that while history must furnish the background for the historical drama, it is the purely human that must receive the chief stress.

In general, the evolutionary conception persists. It is true that the idea of gradual and continued development does not come forward to any great extent in the plays, since this idea does not lend itself readily to dramatic treatment. To be sure, it constitutes a fairly important element in *Mäster Olof*, as was pointed out above. However, here it seems rather forced to the foreground, since at that time it probably occupied a prominent place in Strindberg's thinking. At the time of the later dramas, he had come to look upon the idea as an accepted fact, and a mere matter of course. The idea is seen at times in *Historiska miniatyrer* and *Nya svenska öden*. The continuity of history is expressed by the continual binding of the present on the one hand with the past, and on the other, with the future. We are often made conscious of the fact that the struggle which we see portrayed is merely an incident in a conflict of long duration. Inherited conflicts are particularly effective in reminding us that the present is but a link in an endless chain of cause and effect. A great deal of historical material is introduced rather loosely into the dialog. In *Erik XIV*, and still more in *Gustav Adolf*, the effort to keep the past before the

audience develops to such a point as to threaten at times the unity of the drama. Passages of slight relevancy are introduced. In these two as well as in the later plays, characters appear where the only motivation is apparently to ensure that the continuity of the past into the present will not be forgotten. References to earlier history are at times made possible by the naturalistic dialog which skips readily from one subject to another in the manner of easy every-day conversation.

The idea of the relativity of truth occurs to some extent in nearly all of the works. It is practically absent in *Folkungasagan*, is prominent in *Gustav Vasa* and *Erik XIV*, reaches its zenith in *Gustav Adolf*, where it is the central theme and is treated in its various aspects with the chief stress on the religious phase. It is still an important element in 1901 in *Engelbrekt*. After this, it is found only occasionally.

The monistic interpretation of history remains a strong element thruout the dramas of the second period. As in the earlier years, the concept of Sweden as an integral part of Europe runs thru the works which deal with Swedish history. Thruout the period we find a portrayal of international relationships and copious references to the countries outside of Sweden. As in the case of references to earlier history, so here material concerning European history—or even historical material touching other continents—is introduced into the dialog. The author seizes upon the slightest pretext to bring in references to other countries. The statement made concerning the naturalistic dialog in connection with references made to earlier history, holds true here also. The conception of a movement in Swedish history as paralleled by similar movements in other countries or parts of the world which was noted in *Mäster Olof*, is found also in *Engelbrekt*, *Carl XII*, *Kristina*, and *Gustav III*, which were written in 1901 and 1903. The persistent and clear-cut expressions of the conception in these plays show that it was

at this time a conscious historical theory with the dramatist. The intellectual influence of other countries, especially France, on Sweden is suggested in *Engelbrekt* (1901), and stressed in *Kristina* (1903) and *Gustav III* (1903).

The idea of the recurrence of historical events as a monistic conception of history is found thruout the plays in the form of parallelisms between events in the plays and events in earlier history, usually biblical. The biblical parallelism is found to some extent in *Mäster Olof*. However, at that time it was probably not a conscious device for expressing a unitary concept of history.

The essential unity of all religions is expressed in *Gustav Adolf* and the sketches,—*Nya svenska öden* and *Historiska miniatyrer*.

The interest in the apparent contradictions of life which were discussed in the section on the resolution of contraries, runs thru nearly all of the dramas and sketches of the second period. It usually appears in the form of human inconsistency. Its fullest expression is found in *Gustav Adolf*.

The idea of integration and disintegration as the two poles of historic activity is found scattered thru the works of the second period. In its limited application to religious change, it is restricted to *Gustav Vasa*, *Erik XIV*, *Gustav Adolf*, and the sketches. This limitation is evidently due to the fact that the other dramas do not involve the question of religious sectarianism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the same manner, the prevalence of the relativity theme in these same plays may be partly due to the fact that the portrayal of religious division gives a particularly good opportunity for the application of the doctrine of the relativity of truth. It is true, nevertheless, that in these plays Strindberg applies the doctrine to other problems. This fact may be explained in different ways. Possibly the dramatist's attention became fixed on the doctrine thru the religious problem. He then extended it to other fields. Possibly, he happened to be particularly interested in it when writing the plays, which by their subject matter gave him an extra



Thruout the second period, we find a portrayal of Divine Providence guiding the destinies of men, controlling human plans and fitting them into a larger divine purpose. Man is often seen attempting to carry out his own plans and unconsciously carrying out God's purposes, which are sometimes the very opposite of his own. Evil men sometimes accomplish great good. God's impartiality in His choice of tools is generally seen; theoretical expression of it is given in *Folkungasagan*, *Gustav Vasa*, *Historiska miniatyrer*, and *Nya svenska öden*. The doctrine of Providence in history, with several of its ramifications, is most completely expressed in *Gustav Adolf*.

It is plain from the above that Strindberg's later historical theories are already amply illustrated in *Gustav Vasa*, *Erik XIV*, and *Gustav Adolf*, which were all written three or more years before "Världshistoriens mystik." It is quite evident, therefore, that the ideas found in the latter work had matured at least three or four years prior to its publication.

The correlation between historical theory and practice is, therefore, fairly close. Where ideas expressed in the theoretical works do not appear in the historical narratives and dramas, this can usually be explained by the fact that all literary forms do not lend themselves equally well to the expression of all ideas. In the earlier period, it is the materialistic evolutionary doctrine that pervades Strindberg's historical interpretation; in the later period, the basis shifts to a spiritual one, but still remains evolutionary. His historical theories, while shifting in some respects, proceed in general from *Mäster Olof* in 1872 to *Bjälbo-Jarlen* in 1909 along an evolutionary-monistic line. Indeed, the chief element in the historical doctrine of the Swedish writer, as well as in his philosophy in general, is his monistic interpretation.

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opportunity for its expression. Or again, his interest in the relativity theme may have led him to choose the period of the Protestant Reformation for his treatment.



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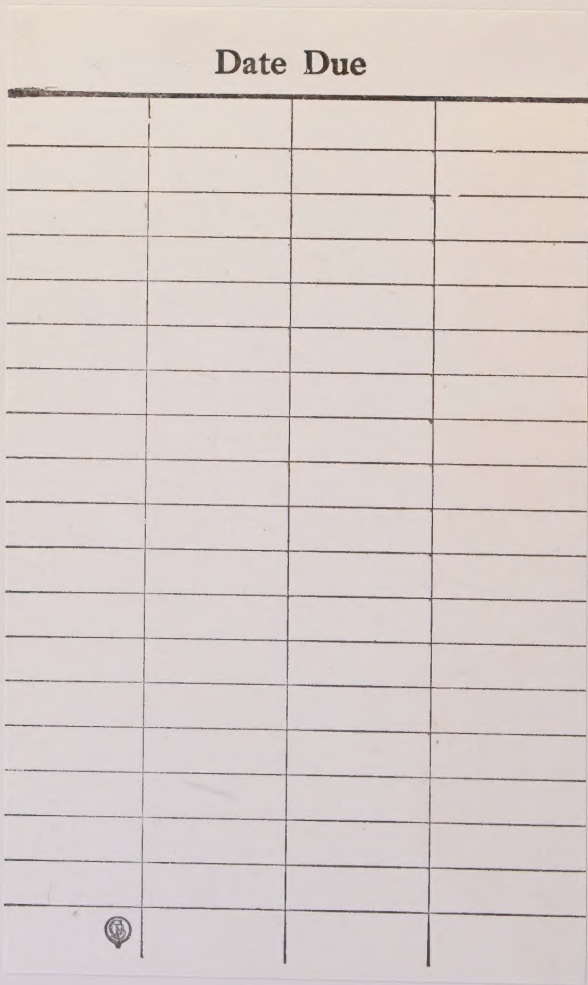










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